The International Crosby Circle Presents

BING

1985

Edited by REG BRISTO

Mar

No 75

"He's not only an artist of Gargantuan stature - he's a great yet a humble man. I hope his next 50 years are as successful as his years to date have been; And I'm pretty sure they will be. He's that rare species which goes on and on, adding to his popularity all the time. No one I've ever met deserves success and happiness more than Bing."

(JOHNNY MERCER in 'METRONOME' Jan. 1944)

"Maybe I'm one of those guys who prefer established excellence to potential power. If so, that preference spells out B-I-N-G. Bing is an institution as solid as the ground we walk on. His interpretations are classics, they are standards for others to shoot at - - the unquestioned tops in tune technique. And in conclusion, I further announce its better, best, and BING!!!"

(VAUGHN MONROE, himself a bandleader/vocalist of great prominence) in BANDLEADERS magazine 1945)

"Crosby is the greatest thing that ever happened in American popular music. Countless millions have heard his voice, beamed by radio to all parts of the world. Moving pictures in which he has appeared have penetrated into the most remote places on the globe. His phonograph records sales have exceeded those of any other individual.

"People who have never seen him feel he is their intimate friend. Few entertainers in history have succeeded in gaining and holding the affectionate regard of the public the way Crosby has.

"By just being himself, the kid from Spokane with a song in his heart has built up a musical empire in which he reigns as king."

(PAUL VANDERVOORT II in BAND LEADERS magazine 1946)

"There is no questioning his supremacy among singers. It is unlikely that a single minute passes, day or night, when his voice is not being heard somewhere in the world - by way of home phonograph, juke box, movie soundtrack, or radio".

(ALLEN SMITH in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST 1942)

"At the end of years of seeing and hearing Crosby, I find myself untired; so is the rest of his radio, motion-picture and record public...and he's somehow a great man. You can't catch pomposity or prestige....

(GILBERT SELDES in "ESQUIRE" 1944)

The above assessments of Bing appeared in the book BING - AND THE BING CROSBY STYLE by Dr. J. MIZE. The point to note is the date of these writings; and to reflect that with another 30 years of his career to run, Bing fully maintained and justified all these opinions right to the end. With acknowledgements to the volume quoted.

ORIGINAL MATERIAL (C) ICC/BING 1985

Magazine of The International Crosby Circle published quarterly.

BING

Secretary/Editor
REG BRISTO,
7 Greenmeadow Close,
CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP44 4PJ

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Keith Parkinson, "Meadowcroft", Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St. Helens, M'side WA10 5LD

CHIEF PUBLICIST: Leslie Gaylor, 114 Medina Avenue, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1HG

When writing to any of the above for Crosby information, please enclose a stamped, addressed, envelope for reply. Postage otherwise gets impossible to bear.

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It has been quite a quarter since the previous issue. After an inauspicious start with the prospects of a blank Christmastide, the Crosby scene suddenly burst into life! As you will see....new functions are announced....another American invasion....

We enjoy our mail - and appreciate varying views. But, we blanch a little when a seemingly sadistic note creeps in. Like when Renee Chester writes from Teneriffe that its breakfast time and the temperature is creeping up to 80°; or another traveller drops us a card from Hong-Kong with a similar message; while we gloomily ponder on whether or not we have the energy to dig the car out of the heap of snow and ice - just so's we can get down to the post office to send off letters to fellow-sufferers ! As for the Aussies - well, we make allowances for their blistering heat while we freeze; come to think of it, a "bush-fire" would be a big help around the garden just now.... Happy reading - and listening !

EDITORIAL

As you would expect, full coverage is given in this issue to the BBC-TV hour-long feature on Bing in the HOLLYWOOD GREATS. Overwhelmingly members thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated Barry Norman's effort. Yet there were those, just a few, who resented the drink, family, 'other women' angles touched upon. We do, too, to an extent, for we - the ICC - exist to honour and remember Bing, enjoy the fruits of his unique career in so many ways. But any comprehensive review of that career, any in-depth profile as they say today, will cover those points. They happened. True, as is also the modern 'cult', they are given spiteful, venomous, treatment (from quarters you may or may not expect it) - tho' that certainly wasn't the case in the Norman programme.

Bing was a flesh-and-blood man and there is no point at all in being resentful of that fact. And really, to get things in perspective, its all so "old-hat" !

Anyone who has, or has read, CALL ME LUCKY, and that means, I imagine, all of us, will be aware that more than 30 years ago Bing proclaimed to the world what he felt were his shortcomings, his 'failures'. Its all there...."The biggest mistake I made with my boys was giving Gary a car as a high school graduation present.....my situation as a father is maybe a bit more complicated than that which faces most dads.... some of my friends think I'm too tough a disciplinarian with my sons...I'm particularly well known for this at Hayden Lake...but everyone else - meaning parents - went along with my kind of regulation....they'll remember the spankings they got...there have been times when I couldn't tell whether I was Captain Bligh in a Hawaiian sport shirt or the cream puff of the world...Dixie used to tell me I was too lax, that I wasn't stict enough and that I forgot our boys' transgressions too soon..." He certainly mentioned his prison spell ('durance vile' was his typical description) on account of drinking; but he laughed at all the stories about his so-called drinking "..those who saw me fall thro' the drum..."

Old hat indeed! Bing showed he was his own man and, much more important, always strove to do what was best for the boys - but whether he got it right, or the right response was forthcoming, is a matter for some thought.

Another but - look at some of his contemporaries in the drink, scandale, domestic syndrome !

APRIL 27 / NOW IT'S UP TO YOU

JOHN MARSHALL, master-organiser of THE WALDORF affair in 1983, has put the disappointment of 1984 behind him and returned to the fray. He hopes you can, too, for he writes:

If you are a veteran of Bing in London 1984 you may still be bruised from the experience and feel that I bit off more than I could comfortably chew. Things went wrong, obviously, and while I'm willing to soak up 50% of the blame for falling into a bad contract, failure to stick to promises, occasional changes of mind on the part of would-be guests, and other factors qualify for the other half. Experience, as usual, doesn't come any easier with each passing year but you may rest assured that this time around, no snag has been left unturned, no possible error left unprodded. It looks good, feels right, and as a venue for ANY function, Crosby or otherwise, the top-to-bottom newly renovated HOTEL REMBRANDT is truly the cat's pyjamas. Gorgeous is the word we were looking for - and they (the management) haven't forgotten letting us down last year which caused our sudden change in plans.

> In a perfectly straight line across the road from the Victoria & Albert Museum, a genuine five-minute stroll from SOUTH KENSINGTON tube station, and with the expectation of reasonable parking nearby, the potential is there for a quite wonderful day. ALL IT NEEDS IS YOU AND THE MISSUS (OR HUSBAND!) and once again a Crosby social occasion can mark Bing's birthday in the best of all styles.

APRIL 27TH HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR TWO GOOD REASONS: THE 4TH OF MAY IS A WIPE-OUT OWING TO RUGBY, AND IF ONE LOOKS INTO IT PROPERLY, THE 27TH ALLOWS FULL AND ALMOST FINAL ACCESS TO THE CHEAP RAILWAY FARES OBTAINABLE WITH CERTAIN PRODUCTS (PERSIL &C). DON'T knock it when you learn that Seamus and Christina Kelly, two of our dependeables, will save a remarkable £25 with their scissors. The rail offer ends on April 30 so we are killing two useful birds with one date. Give it some thought and leave the car to rust quietly at home.

Dinner, as any London visitor will tell you, is best left to a noble buffet and that is being VERY carefully considered and amassed so as to make sure no one gets a final limp lettuce leaf! Three-course prices in 1985 hardly bear thinking about as regards price but this ensures EVERYONE having a proper plateful.

> As before, 'live' music will encourage the most unsteady and reluctant onto the dance-floor and won't interfere with Bing doing his thing throughout the day. Unless something very untoward happens TEDDY JOHNSON hopes to supply a smile, a song, and one of the very nicest personalities around. Lots to do, too, fully decorated up to the nines and things to fill most Crosbyana needs will be on sale from various sources. Before this campaign gets into its stride the number is already well past the 50 mark and that is the kind of encouragement you can assist with by just making up

your mind. NOW PLEASE! Procrastination time, often so deadly, has been reduced to a few weeks and we do need your letter just as soon as you can possibly get it to us.

So, what's it all going to cost - a splendid hotel venue in Kensington? The 64-dollar question: far, far less than that! £12 per head, precisely the same as in 1983 FOR A FAR SUPERIOR DEAL. We can't get over the way the REMBRANDT looks today - really something else again.

IT WOULD HELP OBVIATE MANY POSSIBLE PROBLEMS IF CHEQUES ONLY ARE SENT THROUGH THE POST. Cash is fraught with things that can go wrong and, if it requires it, your word is your bond for payment on arrival. I assure you you'll have the time and space to meet some very nice people under the most convivial circumstances - we've even flushed out Bert Bishop from his hideaway. So, do help us to make it a day to remember !

WE'RE VERY HAPPY TO PUBLICISE THESE SOCIAL CROSBYANA EVENTS. THE ADDRESS IS:

JOHN MARSHALL, 39 KINGS ROAD, TEDDINGTON, MIDD'X. TW11 0QD

********** Telephone: 01 - 977 - 6081 **********

AND HARD ON THE HEELS OF SOUTH KENSINGTON, AS IT WERE, THERE IS —

GATESHEAD by PHIL MORGAN :

The next social event in the North-East is to be held on FRIDAY, MAY 10, again at THE FIVE BRIDGES HOTEL in Gateshead, commencing around 6pm. The evening will follow our now-established format - films, records, quizzes, all the Crosby conversation you want. The price, including a three-course meal, will be £5.25p Tickets may be obtained either from myself (5, Sanderson Rd., Jesmond, Newcastle) or from JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear - tel. 0632 - 4878761.

Overnight accommodation, bed and breakfast, can be arranged at the hotel at a cost of £9.50 (Friday) and/or £11.50 (Saturday) It goes without saying that all will be most welcome and a splendid evening is assured.

Editor: These regular events in the North-East continue to be well-supported. No wonder, for we get many reports of the enjoyable times they turn out to be.

EAST ANGLIA may be the next area in the social news! MR. CHAS. CULLEY, 25 The Curlews, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk was at Leeds last Sept. 30 and writes: There was a wonderful feeling and atmosphere of fellowship and the thought occurred to me that in East Anglia we have no other personal contact with other members throughout the year. At the present time I would find it difficult to undertake sole responsibility for attempting to establish an East Anglian group membership, but would be very happy to launch a 'local event' subject, of course, to the necessary interest and response.

Editor: Excellent; we're all for local organisation. As Chas. agrees, East Anglia may be an indeterminate area but YOU will know whether or not you are an East Anglian! It will be great if others can contact Chas. Culley at the address given with a view to realising his ideas.

LESLIE GAYLOR

....a considerably abbreviated Leslie this time! Perhaps he's still suffering from shock to find the south getting the worst of the weather instead of the other way about! I think we all had it in our turn, however - and Les did tell us he was exceptionally involved at work and for that matter, at home as well. Nevertheless, he makes his obligatory appearance !

May I, first of all, thank all members for their many Christmas cards and good wishes for 1985. Needless perhaps to say, I most warmly reciprocate such wishes and hope all members have a good 1985 - or the nine-twelths which still remain !

> Although I do send out a very considerable number of greetings cards myself I find it impossible to cover everyone; indeed I must necessarily draw the line somewhere within reason. Expense comes into it - and in some cases, the lack of an address! But I really do appreciate it when so many are kind enough to think of me at such a time.

A present I received at Christmas which pleased me very much came from my ever-thoughtful friend in New York - Judge Francis X. Smith. After visiting many stores in that city he finally located for me the album BOB HOPE IN HOLLYWOOD (MCA).

There are five Crosby tracks on this, including alternate 'takes' of PUT IT THERE, PAL and ROAD TO MOROCCO duets Bing and Bob. I understand The Record Centre in Birmingham were ordering a number of this USA issue early in January and at the time of writing I don't know whether or not MCA here in the UK are making it available. Certainly I heard David Jscobs mention the record on his Saturday BBC Radio 2 programme, when he played one of the excellent Bob Hope - Shirley Ross tracks. But I don't know whether he'd picked up a US copy or that it might indeed be in the pipeline from MCA, left me wondering.

> Not surprisingly, I received numerous letters regarding the TV presentation on BBC-1 of Barry Norman's programme, THE HOLLYWOOD GREATS.

Correspondents naturally gave their own opinion of course. As for myself, well, I lapped it up and well and truly thoroughly enjoyed the programme. There were many other associates and colleagues of Bing I would have liked to have seen on the programme but I realised that a running-time of, say, two hours would have been warranted and it would have been a costly and expensive production to have got it all together. What was there I liked - very much.

My tie-up with BBC record presenter Alan Dell has clearly delighted

many people, those in and out of our Crosby Circle, according to my correspondence. As most will know Alan Dell has a regular spot for Bing now as the finale of his always delightful Sunday afternoon programme "Sounds Easy". And as Alan featured the late Nat King Cole for almost three years in this self-same spot I presume we shall have a good run for Bing via Alan.

I have made available to him many lesser-known Bing recordings and some others that came out only in the UK on 78rpm records as well as some excellent radio songs. Alan tells me he is pleased with these and actually praised my re-recording of them! So, between us, we are hoping we can continue to interest the many listeners to this popular radio programme.

> I also presented Alan Dell with the excellent 2-album set BING CROSBY - GOLDEN MELODIES as a Christmas gift. This is a reissue containing 28 songs originally called STARGOLD issued by German MCA. On this GOLDEN MELODIES set, incidentally, is an alternate take of A GAL IN CALICO; this and other tracks are lined up for airing in the coming months.

I am delighted to note the social events which continue to be organised in Bing's honour and memory and sincerely hope they willbe continued - and supported - throughout 1985 and the years to come.

My best wishes to all.

REGRETTABLY we inadvertently misled the member (MR. A. BRUETON) in the December issue in replying to his queryas to whether there was a JOHNNY MERCER biography. We said we knew of none - and should have known better for MR. W. H. EWERT of Ferndown, Dorset, did indeed tell us of such a volume; in fact we mentioned it in the March 1983 issue! Clearly neither Mr. Bruton or I recalled it!

Mr. Ewert went to the trouble of getting the permission of Mrs. 'Ginger' Mercer for us to reprint a delightful letter Bing wrote (among others) to Johnny, illustrating Bing's great talent in this direction:

"Dear 'Verscable', April 13, 1939

I thought you would be out this way afore now and was surprised to learn you're not coming for a piece. We all miss your Saturday-nite insoucience, but of course you should strike while the iron is hot - and you've got it good and hot right now.

'Angels' to my way of thinking, is your best lyric to date. Youre getting practically poetic. Its a hunk of a song. Trouble is, by the time Kapp gets them to me, all the good singers have opened many lengths on me.

I hope you kept Drinkable out of the clip joints during his Gotham Sabbatical. Doesn't take but two flagons of Trommers' Lager to send him on the town.

Laughable is a champion now. He's at Palm Springs with his ma, catching a tan and getting well spoiled by all the ladies. He slays the chickadees. Strictly a Crosby, I guess.

EASTSIDE OF HEAVEN was good fun under the expansive aegis of D. Wingate Butler. Never engaged in a more pleasant and, I hope,profitable enterprise. The budget was astonishingly low and if John Public takes to the picture favorably, we're a cinch to make a meg or two. (Cont....

"Now John, we're expecting you here for the racing and the 'surfin' and 'turfin', so pack up Ginger et al and summer out this way.

Your friend,
BING.*"

The book in question is OUR HUCKLEBURY FRIEND. The letter is, of course, a purely personal one, full of what might be called Crosbyese. ANGELS, naturally, is a reference to Johnny Mercer's 1939 song, AND THE ANGELS SING. 'Laughable' it might be imagined refers to Gary? 'Drinkable'? Well, we cannot hazard a guess even at his identity! In passing, the letter doesn't smack of "a cold loner" does it?

Mrs. Johnny (Ginger) Mercer carries on her late husband's traditions; she is a member of the council of The American Guild of Authors and Composers and a few years ago formed The Johnny Mercer Foundation for Children. Ginger was a dancer on the Broadway stage before marrying Johnny in 1931.

Mr. Ewert also informs us of a fairly new publication entitled POPS: PAUL WHITEMAN, KING OF JAZZ by Thomas A DeLong. This is the first time the Whiteman family havesanctioned an official Whiteman biography. The publishers are New Century Publishers Inc., 220 Old New Brunswick Rd., Piscataway, N.J. 08854. Price 17.95 dollars, plus postage. With the pound/dollar almost one for one that doesn't take much reckoning! Bing must loom fairly large in any Whiteman story.

"WHAT WOULD SHAKESPEARE HAVE SAID?" - song by Johnny Burke/James V.
********** Monaco in "RHYTHM ON THE RIVER"

Our whimsical, indeed erudite, members continue to astonish us. JIM LOWE of North Woolwich had the above song running around in his head and came up with the following possible answer on what Will might have said on first hearing Bing sing?

"Doth mine ears deceive? And thus deceiving,
confound and confuse my fevered mind? a pox
on these appendages, that do play false and
childish japes, and stultify the reasoning within.
But tarry! - for man of woman born, did of truth,
Utter these melodic tones, and I would'st deny a
Thousand - nay! - ten thousand, had'st I not heard
This magical, revelational, voice...
Not with the false receivers adorning my countenance,
but verily....with my soul.
That such beauty could be birthed, from mere mortal man,
Lends mine eyes to gaze Heavenwards, and a paean of joy
Involuntarily issues from within.
And God is in his Heaven, and all's right with the world..
For I know'st, I did hear a sound, born of the
Expirations of the breast, from caverns deep....
Issuing forth, as of a thousand turtledoves,
Cooing in harmonious unison..... "

Like it? I love it. Its good clean fun, too !

OVERLEAF is a very, very familiar Crosby song lyric - indeed, a check might reveal this particular Irish Lullaby has been reissued more than any other. Yet, as some members have declared, the song takes on a new meaning when seen in print !

That's An Irish Lullaby

Over in Killarney, many years ago,
Mither sang a song to me
In tones so sweet and low,
Just a simple little ditty,
In her good ould Irish way,
And I give the world if she could sing
That song to me this day.

"Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loora-loo-ral, hush now, don't you cry!
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, that's an Irish lullaby."

Oft in dreams I wander, to that cot again,
I feel her arms a-huggin' me
As when she held me then,
And I hear her voice a-hummin'
To me as in days of yore,
When she used to rock me fast asleep
Outside the cabin door.

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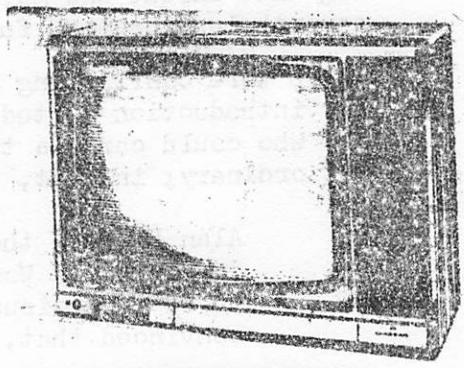
Hollywood GREATS



BING

BBC-ONE

ASSUREDLY ON THE BOX

It seemed almost as if the TV planners had deliberately set out to confound us! Scanning the bumper issues of the Christmas programmes revealed no Crosby films or shows and members were gloomily writing to us to bemoan this lamentable omission. Not that the screens were entirely blank; we caught glimpses of Bing in an Ingrid Bergman show, also in a Sgt. Bilko programme. Then there was that delightful ITV commercial which invited us to buy some Kentucky Fried Chicken (or something like that), sit down, put our feet up - and listen to Bing Crosby. Then an off-screen voice exclaimed: "What again!" And there were plenty of records on radio, nationwide and local, But it was rankling that the TV was offering no Crosby entertainment.

Then almost as if someone had thrown a switch, the screen seemed virtually all Bing as we advanced into January. It seemed there was film after film, trailers for more films, trailers for ...well, what surely must have been the biggest event in Crosbyana since Bing was at the London Palladium: BING featured in THE HOLLYWOOD GREATS, on the evening of January 14th.

Written and presented by the well-known BBC film expert, BARRY NORMAN, this surely was a big event for all who admire Bing - and that brought in most of the population, even if they're not sufficiently dedicated to join our Circle!

Mail has indicated that overwhelmingly, members were delighted with the programme. That is certainly the view of myself for I found it quite splendid, with very little at all to quibble about. Clearly Barry Norman had done his homework on his subject and we were cert-

ainly spared some of the gross inaccuracies that usually creep into accounts of Bing's career. Granted the sheer impossibility of covering that unique and marathon career in one hour, the programme was nevertheless crammed full of fascinating detail - and personalities.

There were conflicting comments however. Barry Norman himself in his introduction quoted Bing's own 'epitaph' - "He was an ordinary man who could carry a tune' Barry went on to say Bing was anything but ordinary; in fact, he was a very complex character.

> Alan Fisher, the epitome of the English butler according to P. G: Woodhouse (Jeeves' creator) said that while he was conscious he was living with a legend he was also convinced that, basically, Bing was a very simple man.

Yet such a man was Bing Crosby, it is possible to accept both these opinions as true and accurate.

Perhaps the most telling and profound comment came from son Gary who, among other things, at one time said:

> "Dad was scared that we were going to grow up 'Hollywood kids' - smashing up cars, getting into all kinds of trouble...and just getting more money...."

Surely this explains, vividly, so much? Bing never did take to the tinsel-like qualities of Hollywood. Not only did he have deep-seated religious convictions, but he was acutely intelligent and obviously saw the futility of so much that went on in Hollywood. It is all too easy to understand his horrow that his boys would grow up in that unreal astmosphere. As one newspaper said in reviewing the programme, Bing emerged as basically a sympathetic, understanding, man faced with unbelievable difficulties. With a fame and acceptance that never let up and went on expanding all through the decades, the pressures on his time especially when his first four sons were children, must have been tormenting to him as a father determined to bring up his family - in what time he had available - as good, honest, citizens. That his determination somehow went awry was his tragedy.

The people called upon to contribute to the programme brought some surprise - to see Mary Carlisle and Rise Stevens, for instance, still looking so elegant and charming. Artie Shaw, the celebrated jazz-man, leader and clarinettist (also much mafried!) was also a surprise for we have never before seen him presented as a Crosby commentator! He gave Bing his full due as a singer - e.g.

> "Bing could sing jazz....bands don't normally like the singers..they get in the way. But Bing knew jazz... He had no peer, he was an originator, he owed nothing to any other singer.....all the others followed Bing, but he was his own man....."

Pity he had to put in that remark about Bing having to be held up at the microphone; seems such a pity that when asked to make comments so many people have a tendency to romance, to throw (perhaps with a view to raising a smile?) off-beat remarks about the subject, which might be true, but usually are not. However, one can make allowances in that direction. There seems little doubt that Bing ceased any tendency to hard drinking very early in his married life, whatever he did earlier. And, he refused to let his marriage to Dixie break up.

Carroll Carroll's contribution (he was a radio script-writer for Bing for ages) was rather indeterminate - except that he did reveal that Bing - like royalty! - carried no money! He, Carroll, apparently paid for their lunches, and "Hi Carroll, glad to know you!" was Bing's best greeting to newcomers!

Rosemary Clooney revealed that she first met Bing after Dixie had died and that he was then a very lonely man. Rosie was staunch in her praise of Kathryn who had been so good for Bing, even to the extent of wearing dark, even black clothes, so that she would lessen at least in appearance their big age difference.

B) Hope, naturally, was leaned on quite heavily and was as we always know him to be about Bing...though h did produce a new basis for the "boo-boo-boo's" - Bing was inclined to forget lyrics.

It has become quite clear in recent years that PHIL HARRIS was Bing's closest friend; and Phil seemed moved when he said that Bing declared this in an interview on one occasion. He also confirmed that Bing loved to sing- first thing in the morning, drive 100 or 200 miles and sing all the time. Phil was a privileged passenger!

And it was Phil Harris who said that what hurt Bing was that not one of those four boys finished college. Another telling comment; whatever Bing's shortcomings were (or alleged to be) that takes some explaining. Gary was considerably less venomous than when commercially assisted in his book and indeed, in some odd way, invited a degree of compassion. He said, for example, that he didn't concentrate on doing anything RIGHT, his concern was that he did nothing wrong, fearing the outcome from his father. How come then, that he didn't at least finish college?

> Yet he did indicate that there had been a rapprochement between him and his father in more recent years and that he felt "I was now okay in his eyes..."

The whole hour was beautifully interlarded with some great film clips, still photos &c. The well-known kitten routine from BELLS OF ST. MARY'S, the agitated song-and-dance man in COUNTRY GIRL, the very appealing railway-carriage scene when Bing gave the little French boy a "birthday"...very early Bing in what must have been the computerised method of colouring old film, looking good to in WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE...song-sheets, snatches of song...

> Did you notice how distinctly 'podgy' Bing was with Al Rinker and Harry Barris in that excerpt of THE BLUEBIRDS AND THE BLACKBIRDS ? Certainly added credence to that much later radio crack by a girl: "Love the rhythm boys...the chap playing the piano, the dark-haired curly one..but that little fat one with the cymbal creases me! (Or words to that effect).

Although the film HIGH SOCIETY was mentioned in fulsome style, no clips, only 'stills' were seen. Strange? But a nice interview with Grace Kelly had her explaining that Bing was a little strained at first in A COUNTRY GIRL but soon settled down. Barry Norman suggested Bing surprised everyone, and perhaps even himself, with his acting in that film.

Rise Stevens gave her opinion that if Bing hadn't been wider, particularly 'more top' he might have gone on to other things. As she herself was an opera-singer we may conclude similar activity was what she had in mind for Bing with that comment. But one wonders: could he have gone on to other things? Barry Norman later said Bing did what he could do best - if he had 'progressed' to opera, his universal appeal would have been considerably diminished, whatever it did for opera-lovers!

> No doubt everyone noted that some of the interviews were dated 1978. Did Barry purloin these from other programmes, or did he begin his work and research on this programme those seven years ago? There was certainly a coincidence when he was himself speaking towards the end of the feature and he was seen standing outside Chappells in New Bond Street, London where Bing made his last album recordings for Ken Barnes.

Bing was duly afforded also his full stature - the voice most heard by most people in the world, Hollywood's most popular actor for almost two decades, and a career spanning more than 50 years, in all media, records, radio, films, TV, stage; his sporting activities, too, were not neglected. The programme carried us from the family birthplace to that sombre dawn in the Holy Cross cemetery.....ending appropriately, perhaps, with Bing once more in the Mack Sennett short singing WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT. It was a very full, very comprehensive, presentation of Bing and proved to be of absorbing interest and no little delight.

Members may not have caught BARRY NORMAN on TV the next day in the BBC lunchtime programme, PEBBLE MILL AT ONE. Here he was interviewed on his series - and the larger part of the interview centred on Bing. When Barry reiterated that every popular singer since Bing owed something to him, the interviewer exclaimed: "Including Sinatra?" to which Barry replied, "ESPECIALLY Sinatra....even the Beatles!" And he said again that without doubt Bing Crosby was the greatest entertainer of the century - which reminds us of one of his other pertinent remarks in the actual programme:

> "In these days when the word 'great' is employed to describe anything that's not...well...too bad, if you take it to mean something of surpassing excellence, then Bing Crosby the singer was indeed great."

Looking back over our somewhat random comments on this fine programme we note the omission of another important contributor - the handsome, personable appearance of Harry from what is now called "the second family". And a charmingly honest contribution the young man made.

Great was our appreciation - indeed, delight - at this programme, and it was our impulse to write to Barry Norman expressing thanks and appreciation. Modestly bearing in mind our position as Secretary, however, we refrained from this purely personal and individual opinion and decided to await members' reactions. They weren't long in coming either! Overwhelmingly, members appeared to share our opinion of the programme though here and there isolated irritation crept in concerning family troubles and Bing's alleged drinking! See editorial about that however. So, having our views backed we wrote as follows:

Dear Barry Norman,

I have now received considerable reaction to your profile on Bing in your HOLLYWOOD GREATS series. While it was my wish to write to you immediately on viewing the programme I delayed until I had this reaction. Now it is certain that both our members and certainly I myself would like to both thank you and congratulate you on a splendid presentation - in which, of course, I couple your producer, Sue Mallinson, and indeed all connected with the programme.

Our feeling is that it was quite splendid, according Mr. Crosby his undoubted and legendary status in the world of entertainment - and in so many fields - and not entirely glossing over some of the features that have been so cynically spotlighted since his death. There were undoubted troubles and problems with his first family. After all, he was the first to publicise them himself in his book CALL ME LUCKY, more than 30 years ago! Gary summed it up, perhaps unwittingly, when he said "Dad didn't want us growing up 'Hollywood kids' ...banging up cars, getting into trouble, too much money..." Bing had a tremendous problem with his career, his unprecedented fame - and lively young lads. As for 'other women' perhaps it would be pertinent to ask how many men could work so many years in the glamour (artificial or otherwise) of Hollywood and not occasionally succumb! One might also add that there is a world of difference in the acclaim Bing received and these days when a 'pop' star measures his success by the amount of female underwear thrown at him!

We, as a body, have never believed, or wanted to believe, that Bing was a saint, the ever-singing, ever-happy, troubadour. The idea is rather preposterous. He was, as he so often said, an ordinary man who got lucky. We query a lot of the "luck' however. He wasn't so ordinary either, come to think of it.

Your programme included items that were new even to some of our dedicated veterans. The inclusion of a computerised colour shot of Bing as a very young man was particularly noted.

Again, our thanks and congratulations.

Yours sincerely,

REG BRISTO.

Regret error top line of previous page: Please read "Risé Stevens gave her opinion that if Bing's range <u>had</u> been wider, &c."

Members will have heard it announced at the conclusion of the programme that Barry Norman has written a book based on his series covering six film stars, and Bing naturally is featured. We haven't seeh it yet.

A reply by BARRY NORMAN appears on the next page.

February 14 BBC TV

Dear Reg,

Thank you very much for your letter. I'm delighted to learn that the Bing Crosby programme survived the true acid test applied by people like yourself. I had always hoped the profile would be fair and your comments encourage me to believe that it was.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

BARRY NORMAN FILM 85

THEN THERE WERE THE FILMS!

Buttressing, as it were, this monumental feature on Bing, and as if proffering evidence of its validity, there came a spate of Crosby films to the huge enjoyment of all. Let's see now, what were they...?

ROAD TO BALI (1953)
HERE COMES THE WAVES (1944)
ROAD TO RIO (1948)
HIGH SOCIETY (1956)
STAGECOACH (1966)

In this neck of the woods, we had HIGH SOCIETY twice on successive Sundays due to the fact that we can receive BBC West of England as clearly, if not more so, than BBC Wales. And the latter often re-shuffles main network schedules to screen a rugby match; happily it always catches up on films. We do feel sorry for those keen members who purchased the video just a week before it was televised!

Comment should be superfluous as we are all familiar with these films; yet they do, as always, prompt new thoughts. One that came to me mainly was the sheer professionalism of the 'production' numbers, e.g. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE, ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE, NOW YOU HAS JAZZ...no matter how often I see the last-named I find it quite breath-taking in its verve - with Bing and Louis together in such fashion truly there were two virtuosi of whose like we are not likely again to see. I remember the very first time I saw the screening of NOW YOU HAS JAZZ the cinema audience burst into spontaneous applause at its conclusion. That, in my experience, doesn't happen very often. And this happened not in the UK but abroad in an English-speaking colony.

Biassed as we undoubtedly are, surely such efforts make most screen and TV productions look third rate ? And that's probably praising them.

And a quarter of a century after Bing's first films, he came back as strong as ever to lead in one of the finest musicals of all time - HIGH SOCIETY.

I often wonder if the producers, or the musical director, Johnny Green were chagrined, or are so, every time they see HIGH SOCIETY? No doubt you noticed that the song played over both the opening and closing credits was YOU'RE SENSATIONAL, sung by Sinatra in the film. Yet it was completely overshadowed in popularity by SAMANTHA, LITTLE ONE, certainly TRUE LOVE, and NOW YOU HAS JAZZ. We should add that DID YOU EVAH, the Crosby-Sinatra duet, also overshadowed it! Sinatra's popularity, after a long spell in the doldrums, was in the ascendant in the 50's and its possible the aforementioned gentlemen felt it would help 'sell' the film to use YOU'RE SENSATIONAL as its main theme?

And to be scrupulously fair, WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE was a good song, well-performed by Sinatra and Celeste Holm. The story was fluffy, as the title indicates, and I must confess to a certain sympathy for George, the intended husband. He had rather a raw deal!

But who can now see Grace Kelly on the screen in all her ravishing feminine beauty and not feel anguished at her tragic demise - as Princess Grace, of course. If Bing didn't fall in love with her, its probably safe to say that every male in the vast audiences did!

STAGECOACH achieved a certain nadir for most of us. A Crosby film in which he sang not a note...not even over the credits. So many regretted that Bing began to sing less and less in his films until we reached this ultimate - the complete blank.

> Barry Norman describedit as "a drab remake"; once again, we find ourselves in complete agreement with him. It would have been a splendid film - if we hadn't all got used to seeing the original 1939 classic. Despite having the advantage of colour against black-and-white of the 1939 production, the 1966 version just did not match up. It was probably a mistake to do it.

This doesn't mean that the cast, certainly including Bing, didn't perform well, for they most certainly did, but knowing the full story (always a handicap to complete enjoyment) and remembering the performances of John Wayne, Andy Devine, Thomas Mitchell, Claire Trevor, Donald Meek and the others in the pre-War production took most of the gloss off the second effort. Nevertheless, it was still a pleasure to see Bing once more proving that the oft-made allegation (principally by himself) that he couldn't act was a worthless assessment of his talents in this direction.

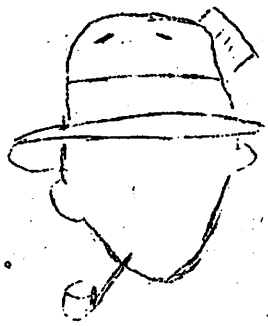
Such was the setting of the film that a song or two - perhaps in the saloons - would have been appropriate. Not the immaculate Bing of musical films but the oft-inebriated doctor singing a good old Western song in a moment of sobriety? Might have made all the difference to the film!

Among all the records played on radio, we were told that Bing's WHIFFENPOOF SONG turned up on a programme entitled THE GOLDEN YEARS - a programme of ballads; and that Benny Green gave as his most-requested record Bing/Fred Astaire with I'VE A SHOOTING BOX IN SCOTLAND. The progress of the BING CROSBY PRO-AM golf tournament was shewn regularly on CEEFAX in January....all told, perhaps our grumbles were to an extent stifled!

The next two pages carry on with the film theme - KEITH PARKINSON'S entertaining piece on the MACK SENNETT 'shorts'.

MACK SENNETT SHORTS

These 'shorts' (short films used as programme fillers in the cinema) have a justified and tangible place in the Crosby story. Now they are historic, especially so because Bing was used in them purely for singing (on his growing radio rputation); And this resulted in some priceless songs, sung in that beautiful, innovative, vibrant, style which so took the world by storm and which Bing never recorded for gramophone disc. That these 'shorts' have survived, with excellent 'cleaned-up' soundtracks is a tremendous boon for all Crosby admirers. And in the process also, it was seen that Bing had film potential..



BY KEITH PARKINSON

Mack Sennett always claimed credit for discovering Bing for the movies, even tho' Bing's cinematic career pre-dates his Sennett period. Sennett was no doubt instrumental in bringing Bing to the attention of the movie-going public on a regular basis and this, in turn, prompted the major studios to take notice. But Sennett is not the only claimant as far as Bing's acting discovery is concerned. Some time in late 1927 or early 1928 lyricist Arthur Freed featured Bing in one of his musical revues at the Orange Grove Theatre in Los Angeles. The theatre was owned by Freed and Freed's biographer, Dennis Lee Galling, contends that Bing's participation in the show, called THE PICKINGS, resulted in Bing being discovered for films.

In his autobiography, "KING OF COMEDY" published in 1955, Sennett puts forward his claim as Bing's discoverer. He tells how he heard Bing at the Coconut Grove in the Ambassadors Hotel and signed him up at 400 dollars a week. Sennett admits to having little confidence in Bing's acting abilities and for arranging for Bing to burst into song at the slightest pretext. Certainly Sennett paid a bargain basement rate for Bing's services considering that the 'shorts' he made were shot in a few days each.

> Sennett also confesses to visiting Bing on the set of BLUE OF THE NIGHT - the last short Bing made for Sennett - and suggesting that Bing speeded up his rendition of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY. "Bing just stood looking at me solemnly with those big blue eyes," wrote Sennett. "His silence was considerably more eloquent than anything he might have said. "Skip it, Bing," I said. "Come to think of it, I like it better your way".

Sennett alleges that Bing had taken several screen tests for the major Hollywood studios prior to his 400 dollar contract. For this reason, Bing was surprised to find that Sennett shot the Crosby featurettes without Bing being made-up. Apparently Bing had been subjected to hours being made-up before going on camera for his earlier tests.

As Sennett tells it, he went on a yachting trip to Alaska after leaving instructions to the studio executives to pick up Bing's option, raise his salary, and put him under long-term contract. On his return, Bing Crosby was under exclusive contract to Paramount.

For the record, the six shorts made for Mack Sennett and released initially by Educational Films are:

1931.	I Surrender, Dear.
1931	One more chance.
1932	Dream House
1932	Billboard girl
1933	Blue of the night
1933	Sing, Bing, Sing.

Note: Although the films were made in 1931, the dates shewn are the release dates.

In 1949 a minor production outfit called Eagle-Lion Films released DOWN MEMORY LANE. This company, active in Hollywood in the late 'Forties, made use of a package of Mack Sennett material which was available for purchase and theatrical reissue and which gave access to Bing's short feature material. Eagle Lion allotted two days for the shooting of any linking footage needed for the compilation feature.

Phil Karlson was hired to direct the new material which he wrote together with Steve Allen, who served as narrator. First Karlson selected what of the available Sennett material he wanted to use and then he put the items into some semblance of a story line. The new dialogue showed Allen as a television show MC. This was appropriate because in the 1950's he rose to prominence in the States as the host of a peoular Sunday night television variety show. In the film of DOWN MEMORY LANE, which has been shewn at least once on British TV, he sat at a desk and did humourous fake commercials between contributions from Bing, W.C.Fields, The Keystone Kops and others.

This project was Steve Allen's first significant show business opportunity. Until then, his activites were confined to CBS radio and director Karlson was sufficiently impressed with Allen's wit and delivery to offer him the DOWN MEMORY LANE assignment. In addition to the previously mentioned top-rated television show, film buffs will remember him for the major acting chore undertaken when he played the title role in Universal's THE BENNY GOODMAN STORY in the mid-'Fifties.

Editor: Mack Sennett's claim to be Bing's discoverer in films has considerable validity. True, Bing appeared in other featurettes such as TWO PLUS FOUR and RIPSTITCH THE TAILOR, and also in the opus, KING OF JAZZ, but none of these activities produced film contracts for him. But it must also be conceded that when Paramount took their big step and placed Bing under contract for his first major, feature, film THE BIG BROADCAST, his sensational coast-to-coast radio popularity had become a dominant factor.

Members will have been shocked and saddened at the sudden demise of MATT MONRO. The scourge of cancer would seemed to have attacked him in a most virulent way and his premature death is a sad blow. Matt was actually performing just a few short weeks before yet pictures of the singer immediately before his passing showed just how shockingly he had been assailed. Essentially a ballad singer his voice was extremely agreeable, as was his modest, unassuming, style. Matt, a one-time London bus driver had rightly attained international status - and the warm approbation of Bing.

KRAFT MUSIC HALL

We got as far as the programme for 21st July in the previous issue in the listing of songs Bing sang in the long-ago and legendary Kraft Music Hall series. It was announced at the end of this programme that Bing was going on vacation and would return in October, 1938. And this is where we resume. Once again it will be noticed that, prolific though Bing's commercial recordings were, there are still many songs he sang over the air which never reached commercial disc.

20th October 1938

I've got a pocketful of dreams
Silver on the sage
I don't want to play in your yard
Laugh and call it love
Small fry (with Johnny Mercer)
Mutiny in the nursery
Summer souvenir.

3rd November 1938

Ya got me!
Red Wing
My reverie
The Dipsy Doodle
Could be
Mexicali Rose
Summer souvenir

17th November 1938

Lady on the two-cent stamp
I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls
Laugh and call it love
Medley: I let a song go out of my heart/Two bouquets/That old feeling
Small fry (with Johnny Mercer and Rose Bampton)
Could be, could be (with J.Mercer, Marie Wilson & Ken Carpenter)
Swing low, sweet chariot.

1st December,1938

Who blew out the flame?
Medley: Don't be that way/Once in a while/In the shade of the new apple tree.
Ya got me
Summer Souvenir
Back home again in Indiana
Old folks

15th December 1938

The funny old hills
I cried for you

27th October, 1938

Kentucky Babe
Garden of the moon
You must have been a beautiful baby
Don't let that moon get away
Medley: You took the words right out of my heart/This is my night to dream/Gypsy in my soul.
When mother nature sings her lullaby

10th November, 1938

I've got a pocketful of dreams
At long last, love
Long, long, ago
Garden of the moon
Darling Nellie Gray

24th November 1938

You must have been a beautiful baby
At long last, love
My sweetheart's the man-in-the-moon
My reverie
Mexicali Rose.

8th December, 1938

Lullaby in rhythm
Hurry Home
When you're a long, long, way from home
My reverie
Mexicali Rose

22nd December 1938

The lonesome road
Adeste Fidelis

I have eyes
Old folks
Without you
Who blew out the flame?

29th December 1938

Between a kiss and a sigh
The funny old hills
Jeepers Creepers
My melancholy baby
Medley: Down by the old millstream (with Bob Burns, Ken Carpenter & Jack Carson)
Dear old girl/Sweet Adeline
Its a lonely trail
Auld Lang Syne (with entire company)

Lullaby in rhythm
You're a sweet little headache
Hurry home
Silent night, holi

5th January 1939

You must have been a beautiful baby
I have eyes
I'm just wild about Harry.
Have you forgotten so soon?
Old folks

12th January 1939

I must see Annie tonight
That pal that I loved
A kid named Joe
Between a kiss and a sigh
Its a lonely trail

19th January 1939

Jeepers Creeperd
I have eyes
I used to love you but its all over
They say
When you're a long, long way from home

26th January 1939

This can't be love
The umbrella man
Blues my naughty sweetie gives eo me
Hurry home
Old folks

2nd February 1939

Thanks for everything
Deep in a dream
Jeepers Creepers
When its apple-blossom time in Normandy
Its a lonely trail

9th February 1939

Together
This can't be love
You're a sweet little headache
A kid named Joe
The umbrella man

16th February 1939

Missouri waltz
The funny old hills
Deep in a dream
I cried for you
Its a lonely trail

23rd February 1939

Could be.
Teacher, teacher!
The umbrella man.
I have eyes
If I had my way
Hurry home

2nd March 1939

Penny serenade
Yaka Hula, Micy dula
I get along without you very well
I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair
You're a sweet little headache

9th March 1939

S'posing
Little Sir Echo
Could be
I cried for you
Deep in a dream

16th March 1939

Sing a song of sunbeams
East side of Heaven
Believe me if all those endearing young charms
Penny serenade
You're the only star in my blue Heaven

(Cont. over...

Members are urged to include the postal code in their address; its another safeguard against copies of BING going astray.

23rd March 1939

Honolulu
I get alone without you very well
Sweet Genevieve
Little Sir Echo
That sly old gentleman

30th March 1939

Hang your heart on a hickory limb
I want a girl just like the girl that married dear old dad.
You're the only star in my blue Heaven
I cried for you
I have eyes

6th April 1939

Little Sir Echo
Sing a song of sunbeams
We've come a long way together
What can I say dear, after I've said I'm sorry?
Wrap your troubles in dreams

13th April 1939

I'm building a sailboat of dreams
Hang your heart on a hickory limb
It must be true
I get along without you very well
That sly old gentleman

20th April 1939

Teacher, teacher!
And the angels sing
Honolulu
In a bungalow where the red, red, roses grow.
You're the only star in my blue Heaven

27th April 1939

Class will tell (solo)
Class will tell (duet with Bob Burns)
We've come a long way together.
Mickey
Our love.

4th May 1939

Tuck me to sleep in my old Kentucky home
Delightful delirium (solo)
Delightful delirium (duet with Bob Burns)
I promise you

11th May 1939 - no details available.

18th May 1939

Delightful delirium (solo)
Delightful delirium (duet with Bob Burns)
Wishing (will make it so)
When you were sweet sixteen
If I didn't care
Don't worry 'bout me

25th May 1939: 1st June 1939 --- No details available

8th June 1939

Snug as a bug in a rug
Oh! By jingo

15th June, 1939: 22nd June 1939:
29th June, 1939: 6th July 1939 and
13th July 1939 - no details available.

20th July 1939

Go fly a kite
An apple for the teacher
Still the bluebird sings.

BING THEN ON VACATION UNTIL:

5th October 1939

Girl of my dreams
Oh! you crazy moon

12th October, 1939: No details available.

19th October 1939

The man with the mandolin
Down the old Ox Road
I wonder who's kissing her now?
Blue orchids.

26th October 1939

Day in, day out
Love is the sweetest thing

Supplied, as previously, by RON DANIELS, 1 Oxford St., Victor Harbor, South Australia 5211.

To be continued.

THEY'RE COMING OVER!

ANOTHER AMERICAN INVASION ! THE-BRITAIN-YOU-NEVER-SEE TOUR

Following the visit by many Americans of the Crosby faith (!)to Britain last autumn, taking in the Leeds dinner, THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY is planning what is almost certain to be a much larger 'invasion' this year. The time is propitious with the dollar crshing the pound seemingly out of existence!

> With this in mind KEN TWISS tells us of an exceedingly thoughtful gesture; aware of this dollar/pound situation annual subscription to the BCHS for existing and new members is reduced from 10 to 6 dollars per annum. We're sure this will be much appreciated by those members.

The tour, as headlined above, is described as A THOUSAND MILE JOURNEY THROUGH ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH HERITAGE. Two other organisations are involved in the project but much of the tour has been arranged with Crosby people in mind. Thus they will be in Leeds for our annual dinner.

Leaving the North-West of America on September 20, the main points of the itinerary will be:

Saturday 21 September: Arrive Gatwick; thence coach to Cambridge to see cloistered colleges 'echoing with centuries of writers' footsteps'...

Sunday 22 September: To York to see the Minster....members will be driven to Leeds for annual dinner...

Monday 23:September: 'Thro' ghostly Bronte country'...reception and buffet in private home hosted by the local Bing Crosby Colour Photo Club.... thence to Edinburgh for three days visiting world famous golf courses like St. Andrews and Gleneagles'where Bing Crosby loved to play'

Friday 27 September: To Lake District and Shakespeare 'country'.. Saturday 28 - Stratford-on-Avon..

Sunday 29 September to Bath...thro' Cotswolds, thro' Oxford with its dreaming spires...

Tuesday October 1: On to Salisbury - and Southampton to see and hear special peal of Bells of St. Mary's... on to Brighton to see the cnference centre where Bing g ve his very last public performance....

Weds., Thurs., Frid. Saturday 2-5 Oct - London .....Palladium to see theatre and plaque to Bing....BBC...gala dinner at Dorchester House!

Ambitious in the extreme, not to mention tiring, but at the end the American visitors will have seen a lot that Britons haven't seen! Quite a thought. It has clearly been comprehensively planned and will constitute a memorable visit.

ACROSS the page the headline is not an inebriate's lament - or boast - but an article that recently appeared in HI-FI FOR PLEASURE to whom our most grateful acknowledtements. The story describes the development of magnetic tape from the early days following World War II and the discoveries in Germany.

It has long been known that Bing was concerned with this development on account of his desire to tape his time-consuming radio shows; this story, however, shows that Bing's contribution went beyond being a "first customer" as Ampex to this day advertise. The article has been abridged so that - for us - it deals only with the Crosby content, and its a most interesting story. It ends with a fitting tribute to Bing.

As you can see, a largely abortive effort was made to reproduce the photograph that went with the article. Even so, you can still get the idea.

Following the tape story is a readable article which appeared in THE EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS - again our grateful acknowledgements, and our thanks to the several Scottish readers who sent us the story. Beyond that you will find one of the most famous lyrics of all.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

As a result of the making of the film LITTLE BOY LOST (in this writer's opinion among the best of Bing's acting roles) Bing seemed to strike up quite a rapporte with la belle France - even tho' he was arrested by the gendarmerie for sleeping on the grass! It was as a result of this Paris visit, for instance, that he asked for Nicole Maurey to come to Hollywood for HIGH TIME. Then there was Zizi Jeanmaire!

Jeanmaire, as she was often called, was - is! - a delightful French actress and dancer and appeared in THE DREAM BALLET as well as taking a good role in the 1955/56 version of ANYTHING GOES.

Thirty years later, she and her husband, ROLAND PETIT who did in fact choreograph the dream ballet for ANYTHING GOES, have devised and produced what appears to be a highly spectacular song-and-dance show. The inspiration is derived from Jeanmaire's 20 years in Hollywood and is entitled HOLLYWOOD PARADISE; as beautiful, appealing and long-legged as ever she draws on her experiences with Gene Kelly, Danny Kaye - and naturally, Bing Crosby, repeating the song she also did in ANYTHING GOES - "I get a kick out of you".

The show had its premiere in Marseille where we happen to have our enthusiastic member, PIERRE BUGNOT. Pierre attended the premiere last NOVEMBER and was justifiably excited at this Bing-connection show originating not only in France, but in his own home town. The show went on to Paris and there is talk of an international tour.

Pierre sent us the attractive glossy brochure, or programme, of the show; this contains a splendid 'still' of Jeanmaire with Bing in ANYTHING GOES. There are also pictures of the lady with Danny Kaye and Fred Astaire.

And on the subject of the French connection - we must mention legendary Maurice Chevalier - and Cantinflas! Both worked with Bing, of course.

FORTY YEARS ON SCOTCH

Forty years ago an American signals officer, stationed in Paris, was playing around with electronic equipment left behind by the retreating German army. A legendary death ray at Frankfurt, designed to crash Allied aircraft in flight, turned out not to work. But not far from the ineffective death ray transmitter a radio station was using the world's first hi-fi tape recorder. Those machines, and the special tape needed for good results, ended up being sent in the post to California, as spoils of war. There, thanks largely to Bing Crosby, they turned the American radio and record industry upside down. Now, 3M, the company which managed to make an equivalent tape just before the last German roll was cut and spliced to destruction, is taking tape research quite literally out of this world and into space. Barry Fox delves into the history books for the first of this two part look at 3M.

Fate now took a hand in the shape of Bing Crosby.

For several years Bing had been doing radio shows live. He wasn't happy because it was against his nature to run to the tight timing imposed by advertisers who wanted to drop in their jingles and plugs with precision scheduling. So Crosby asked if he could record a loose show and tighten it up with editing before transmission. Radio network NBC told Crosby he couldn't. So Crosby split from NBC and started broadcasting the same show with the new rival ABC network.

The ABC engineers used 16 inch discs, running at 33⅓ rpm. Editing was by copying from disc to disc, often several times over. Audio quality was poor and audience ratings fell off because Crosby just didn't sound like the Bing the listeners had heard before. In Hollywood news travels fast, and Bing got to hear of the new tape medium. It sounded like the answer to his prayers. There was now some complicated behind the scenes politics because Mullin had done a deal with Ranger which barred him from working with Ampex and Harold Lindsay. Remember that Mullin was the man with 50 reels of the precious German tape, code named L to distinguish it from the earlier poor quality C type. So Ampex had to look for other sources of tape. One potential source was a Minneapolis company with experience in coating adhesives. That company, of course, was 3M.

Making tape was one problem. Making matching record and playback heads was another. Imagine trying to make a tape head without any tape to try it on! Ampex at this time (Spring and Summer 1947) were in deep trouble. The staff were working without pay. The only tape available was a few reels borrowed from Mullin who was busy working with Colonel Ranger to try and pre-record the Bing Crosby radio show. To cut a long and vexatious story short, in the summer of 1947 the Ranger-Mullin joint venture ground to a halt. Ranger's attempts to copy the German Magnetophon just didn't work. Mullin threw in his hand with Ampex and 3M and the die was cast.

In June the Crosby production team asked Ampex and Mullin to demonstrate their system in Hollywood. No-one knew at the time that the Ampex recorder (the model 200) could not record; it could only play back tapes made on Mullin's German machines! But none of the Crosby engineers realised they were being fooled. Bing signed a personal cheque for 50,000 dollars, which saved Ampex from going under. The company's engineers soon made the recorder heads work properly. The Crosby production team decided to pre-record the next batch of shows using tape.

The first recording, for the first Bing Crosby radio show of the 1947-1948 season, was made in August 1947. Transmission was not scheduled until October 1st. The Crosby team were leaving themselves plenty of time in case there were technical problems. As an added insurance they dubbed from tape onto disc after editing, and transmitted from disc. This was necessary because initially all the taping was done on those two original German Magnetophons, using those 50 reels of German tape. There was still no home produced tape product to replace it.

At that time no-one knew anything about tape editing. They made it up as they went along, using the then-new Scotch sticky tape. But as modern tape buffs will well know, ordinary Scotch tape soon oozes adhesive, falls apart and sticks one tape wind on the spool to the next. The engineers tried talcum powder, even film cement. Once a roll of tape had been cut and edited, the cut section could not be used again. So the supply of German tape soon ran low. Also the two German Magnetophons were absurdly over-worked. Ampex delivered its first record-capable machines in April 1948 and the trusted Telefunken-Magnetophons were only then taken out of service.

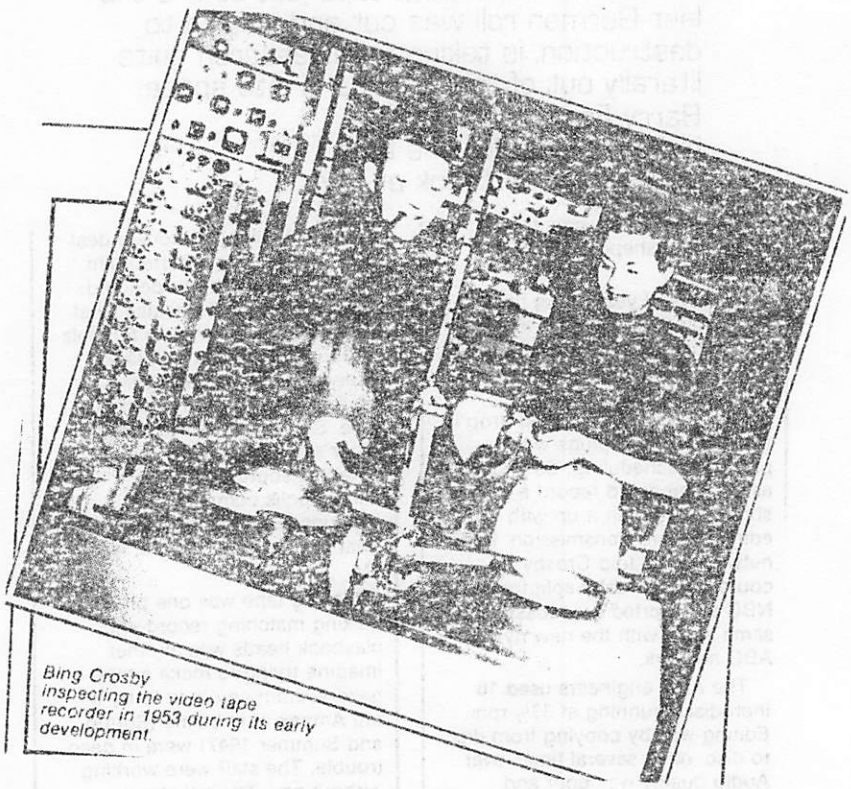
Week after week they pre-recorded the Crosby show on tape and the production team took out jokes, added laughs, tightened up timing and excised fluffs. Crosby come over as a casual but polished performer. Audio quality was so good that the public didn't even know they were hearing a recording. That's how the art of artificial perfection was was born.

It is also incidentally how today's tape speeds were arrived at. It's an interesting story because it makes a mockery of the current absurd and neo-religious attempts at decimalizing everything in sight. The original AEG Magnetophon ran the tape at one metre a second. In 1936 this was dropped to 76cms a second. Why the odd speed? Because Telefunken used a capstan of 10mm diameter and a mains powered synchronous motor running at 1500rpm; C = 2 * R twenty five times a second. When Ampex engineers had to demonstrate a playback-only machine to the Crosby producers, they had no choice but to stick with the original German speed, because the recording was made on a German machine. But America never has thought metric. So they rounded it out to the nearest imperial value, 30 inches a second. So 30ips became the bench mark tape speed from which all other speeds have since been derived by halving. Early Ampex machines, for instance, soon ran at 15 inches a second to double tape playing time. From then onwards the industry continued dividing by 2, down to audio cassette speed of 1⅞ inches a second. When you now see metric tape speeds quoted, they are round equivalents of the inch per second standard. When the audio industry talks about ips, it really does mean ips.

The first 3M tapes delivered to Ampex were far too noisy. The 3M engineers then went away, and without telling anyone, tried using iron oxide intended for colouring red paint. When coated onto paper backing it came close to the performance of the German L tape. It even had an advantage. The German tape that Mullin had taken back to America had iron oxide embedded into the plastic base, rather than coated on top. This tape was thick and uneven. So the frequency response varied from roll to roll making editing between rolls impractical. When the Ampex machines were tweaked, for instance on bias and record level, 3M was able to get better results from a higher quality oxide.

By the time Mullin started to record the second batch of 26 half-hour Crosby shows he had new Ampex machines and virgin tape from 3M. That was in April 1947, and Mullin went on working with Bing until 1951. By then the LP disc had arrived and the music recording industry was using tape for its longer playing time and ease of editing. In 1953 jazz trumpeter Buck Clayton unwittingly summed up what the

It is surely fitting that there is now a posthumous issue of Bing Crosby recordings (on the Philips label) which is made possible only by the tape technology which Bing supported so wholeheartedly. In the mid 50s Bing Crosby made a string of recordings in Hollywood, backed by the Buddy Cole quartet, his regular group at the time. These recordings were made on mono tape, in a professional studio, for use in the Bing Crosby Radio Show. Some were used, some were not. After Bing died, following his last appearance in London, arranger Pete Moore wrote modern full orchestral backings to blend in with the old Buddy Cole and Bing tapes. In the winter of 1978/1979 a British orchestra recorded these new backings, in stereo. The modern tapes were mixed in with the mono originals that could never have existed without the technology of tape.



Bing Crosby inspecting the video tape recorder in 1953 during its early development.

THE SHOW GOES ON!

The old groaner who owned an empire

PETER ROBSON CONCLUDES HIS SERIES

THERE was something so laid back about the guy that suggested almost anything in life was just too much like hard work.

The battered hat perched on the back of his head, a well-smoked pipe dangled from between his teeth and an engagingly droll Irish-American face . . .

Bing Crosby spent the better part of 50 years creating his own image of a congenial loafer. Yet nothing could have been further from the truth.

And that truth became public shortly after the Old Groaner collapsed and died from a heart attack on a Spanish golf course in October 1977.

If his sudden death shocked his millions and millions of fans across the world, so did the later revelation that behind Bing's easy-going, nonchalant, public personality, was a vastly different private man.

THE smooth face of the young Bing . . .

PIPE and pork-pie hat . . . Bing's typical image.

The real Bing Crosby was a hard-working, tough-talking, business tycoon, who beavered away for up to 16 hours a day virtually seven days a week.

COMMERCIAL EMPIRE

His estate had become a commercial empire. For Crosby had invested his showbusiness wealth in oil wells, a fruit juice cannery, a professional baseball team, a huge cattle ranch, one of America's largest caravan sites and a marketing company which exploited internationally everything from television shows to children's toys.

Yet Bing didn't just enjoy making money for the sake of acquiring wealth.

One of Hollywood's longest-running guessing games was trying to work out how many fortunes Bing had handed over to charities during the last 40 or 50 years.

Nobody except Bing Crosby, the tax collector and the many charities, ever knew the truth.

Probably his professional sparring partner comedian Bob Hope summed up the Crosby enigma best of all.

Shortly after Bing's death, Bob commented: "The world loved Bing Crosby with a devotion that not only crossed international boundaries, but erased them.

"Bing was positive proof that you can replace a military uniform with a pork-pie hat, a Hawaiian shirt — and a pipe."

During an amazingly long and versatile showbusiness career, Bing's lazy, crooning baritone made him into one of the world's highest paid entertainers.

Certainly, it was a position he held probably far longer than any other top singer.

His career spanned 400-million record sales, 67 successful films and — right up until he died — Bing Crosby was kept busy turning down other film offers. "Thanks . . . but I guess I'll let "High Society" say it all for me, "was his favourite get-out quip.

BING . . . all spruced up as a tycoon.

Fortunately, Bing never quite quit showbusiness.

The one commitment that he never overlooked was his Christmas family show on television.

"It's as corny as hell," he would explain, "but it sure is fun."

Of course, that was one show that never failed to include the world's best-selling Christmas song . . . Bing's rendering of "White Christmas."

Neither did Bing Crosby overlook his responsibility to his fans. And, outside of the United States, his most numerous and loyal were those in the British Isles.

One of his most devoted is Mrs Margaret Rainbow, from Solihull, near Birmingham.

Recently, she told me that she had a special Bing Crosby Room added on to her house for her collection of 6000 records, 2000 of which are 78s and LPs featuring Bing.

Mrs Rainbow believes that her Crosby collection is "probably the most comprehensive in Europe.

BING first sang "PLEASE" in a Paramount film of 1932—"THE BIG BROADCAST." And it's still going strong. He recently recorded it on a long-player called "CROSBY CLASSICS."

Please

Are you list'ning?
Are you bored?
Have I struck that certain chord?
Does your little heart react?
Why hide the fact?
Keep me guessing,
But you'll find I possess a one-track mind
Love is all I talk about,
But you'll never tune me out!

Please, lend your little ear to my pleas,
Lend a ray of cheer to my pleas,
Tell me that you love me, too.
Please, let me hold you tight in my arms,
I could find delight in your charms,
Ev'ry night my whole life through.
Your eyes reveal that you have the soul
of an angel, white as snow;
But how long must I play the role of a
gloomy Romeo?
Oh! Please say you're not intending to
tease.
Speed the happy ending and please tell
me that you love me, too.

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PROSPECTING FOR GOLD

The unbelievable diligence with which research has proceeded on Bing's records and radio programmes - even TV - is well known. The complete commercial discography has long been available; Cremo, Woodbury, Chesterfield, Kraft, Philco, G.E.C. are all in the process of research. Bing made his first recording with the unknown Don Clarke on October 18 1926 - I'VE GOT THE GIRL - a duet with Al Rinker. Very shortly afterwards he and Al joined the vast Whiteman organisation, making WISTFUL AND BLUE on December 22 1926. From then on, with Whiteman, Arnheim, Grier, the Dorseys and John Scott Trotter among others Bing was seldom out of the commercial recording studios - or the broadcasting studios, either. All of which is known, and as we said, thoroughly researched and finalised. But there is an uncovered, unresearched period, it seems - the many broadcasts Bing took part in with the Paul Whiteman Band on the OLD GOLD (Cigarettes) programme...

DON E. WOOD (West Parley, Nr. Wimborne) writes:

I have recently read what must be one of the most comprehensive jazz books ever written in the past twenty years. I refer to BIX, MAN AND LEGEND by Sudhalter and Evans, a comprehensive account of Bix Beiderbecke's lamentably short but brilliant career. In his Whiteman days - as most of us are well aware, Bix occupied the trumpet (cornet) seat in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra from October 1927 until January 1931 - Bing has told of his friendship and admiration for Bix who was often a room-mate of his when touring with the Whiteman outfit. Indeed, many aver that some of Bing's singing incorporates ad lib phrases a la Bix.

This book not only includes a marvellous discography, listing who played on each session, and what the sales were for each record! For instance, LOUISIANA sold 33,462 copies - and not a lot of people know that! However, in front of the discography there is a quite enthralling appendix which tables close on nine hundred dates in chronological order in the life of Bix.

Each concert and radio broadcast is listed in the diary, with each item complete with every soloist or vocalist involved. What makes it so enlightening for a Crosby-admirer is that over this period there are about fifty songs on which Bing either solos or is joined by the Rhythm Boys. None have been commercially recorded and with the exception of about eight I must confess they are totally unfamiliar to me. Its the first eight I know in the following list but perhaps some of our more erudite members may have sung, whistled, or hummed many of the others.

The great majority of these songs were sung on Whiteman's Old Gold broadcasts over WABC and here is the listing. Those marked with an * were performed by the Rhythm Boys

List overleaf...

SONGS BROADCAST BY PAUL WHITEMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA IN THE
------- "OLD GOLD" BROADCASTS, circa 1927-30 ----------

Broadway melody
Garden in the rain
Love me or leave me
I've got a feeling I'm falling
Mean to me
My sin
Button up your overcoat. *
Hallelujah! *
Diga diga doo *
Give your little baby lots of lovin'*
You give me something to love for
Things that were meant for love
Deep night
Honey
When summer is gone
Nobody's fault but your own
Castle in Spain
You wouldn't fool me, would you?
The one I love loves me
Oh baby, have a heart.
Good morning, good evening, and night
Sunrise to sunset.
Moanin' low.
Feeling the way I do
Nobody but you
Song of Siberia
Out where the moonbeams are born
I'm just a vagabond lover
My dear
My madonna
You're my silver lining of love
Walkin' with Susie
Huggable, kissable, you
I'm doing what I'm doing for love
Love, your magic spell is everywhere
Linger awhile*
A precious little thing called love *
South wind *
Futuristic rhythm *
I 'faw' down and go boom! *
Building a nest for Mary *
Canoodle, oodle along *
I'm referrin' to her 'n' me *
Breakaway *
Red hair and freckles (Bing with the Ponce Sisters)

Wouldn't it be marvellous if by some miracle there are some dusty transcription 78s sitting in a dark depository in America? I can hardly wait to hear SONG OF SIBERIA for instance. There's no harm in dreaming, I suppose.

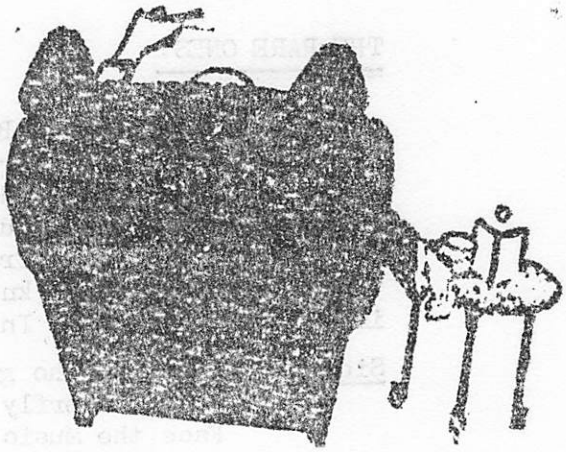
Editor: A forlorn hope, I fear - totally unknown territory. One of the reasons would be that no-one could have dreamt Bing's future at that time; conversely, it could be that Whiteman's broadcasts were recorded for coast-to-coast network reasons. Any day now I expect to hear from someone that they are researching the Juicy Seven or the Musicaladers !

I can do only a shade better than Don Wood - I recognise Rudy Vallee hits like I'M ONLY A VAGABOND LOVER and DEEP NIGHT and one or two others. But mainly, I draw little on these 20's hits. This was the period when the Crosby family obtained a wireless and sat around expectantly to hear their wandering Harry singing! To Mrs. Crosby Snr's chagrin, while they recognised his voice positively there was no mention of him by name! He was, of course, only a member of a large vocal team with Whiteman.

> Bing related something of the sad Beiderbecke story in CALL ME LUCKY - including the somewhat surprising statement that he felt Bix probably played piano better than the cornet. Bix, it seems, was much interested in avant-garde classical music and often spent hours at the piano.

Don's story of Bix is a reminder that Bing, as a young man, suffered two tragic losses. Eddie Lang, the legendary guitarist, also a Whiteman 'man' died as the result of a throat operation - which Bing had advised. There is no doubt he felt these deaths acutely.

BING track EVENTS



The heading, alas, is rather a misnomer, for the truth is it is a case of "non-events"as far as new records are concerned. We had anticipated that another instalment or two of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY, or the BING IN THE THIRTIES Vol II, may have been available both for acquisition and comment. If they are extant, we haven't seen them and certainly no one has bothered to tell us about them. The bigger companies like MCA, DECCA, EMI and PHILIPS are curiously subdued, not only om Crosby material but judging by the shops, on most other artists. The record industry, perhaps reflecting the national economic climate, seems to be in the doldrums.

There are several record-related matters to mention however. Decca have out at least STARS OF THE THIRTIES, remarked on before in these columns with YOUNG & HEALTHY included amongst a wealth of other-artist material. Then again, out of the blue, one of our local shops produces the Joker International album issued a couple of years back - SM 4011, entitled just BING CROSBY. Nice colourful picture of Bing on a red-merging-into-gold sleeve, with 14 titles as shewn:

1. When(sic) the blue of the night (1945: JST)
2. Play a simple melody (with Gary)
3. Don't fence me in
4. Amor
5. On the Aitchison, Topeka & Santa Fe
6. Galway Bay
7. Deep in the heart of Texas.

---

1. I'll be seeing you
2. Swinging on a star
3. In the cool,cool, cool of the evening
4. Sam's song (with Gary)
5. San Fernando Valley
6. Too-ra-loo-ral-loo-la
7. I'm an old cowhand.

Nicely produced, attractive sleeve, excellent sound. I find myself wondering if Joker of Milan, Italy, isn't really Italian MCA?

If you don't have this, although it contains nothing rare, its worth keeping a look out; seems to turn up unexpectedly! Cost £2.99

THE RARE ONES: Broadway Intermission BR 128

Another album from the Blue Lantern Records, PO Box 244, Milford, Michigan 48042, USA. Price 11 dollars....but beware, as mentioned last time, ordering records direct can prove expensive if the Customs, VAT and post-office-handling charges are plonked onto the price on receipt of the parcel from America, virtually doubling the price. On the other hand, as we know several towns have specialist shops which import these albums. In these cases, the price is anybody's guess.

Side 1:		Side 2:	
	I've got the girl.		Iowa
	Poor butterfly		Early American
	Face the Music (Medley)		Dear Friend
	Learn to croon		Thanks - Phil Crosby
	Don't break the spell		Why do I like you?
	Ol' Man River		Silent night (1935)
	Angels of mercy		Adeste Fidelis (1935)
	By the light of the silv'ry moon		White Christmas (1942)
	But not for me.		Top o' the morning (introduced by Bing)

A wide-ranging selection and though some of the titles do not appear particularly rare, the album gets its name because these are different 'takes' to the ones we are more familiar with - as they say.

We've just recently learned that a commercial cassette (and from another quarter, we hear, a record) was issued in connection with the Olympic Games last summer:

GREAT SONGS OF AMERICA FOR THE US OLYMPIC TEAM: CBS New York(No.BT17396)

The label states: "California Federal provides 'Great Songs of America for the US Olympic Team absolutely without cost to the team or supporters like you as Cal Fed's contribution to the spirit of US amateur athletics in world competition: Thank you for helping Cal Fed and me support the US Olympic team - Bob Hope".

Tracks are: Thanks for the memories - Bob Hope with newly recorded appropriate lyrics)
Battle Hymn of the Republic)
When Johnny comes marching home) Bing.
America the beautiful)
Yankee Doodle Dandy - Joel Grey
California here I come - Mitch Miller
God must have blessed America - Glen Campbell
From sea to shining sea - Johnny Cash
This land is your land - Tenessee Ernie Ford
This is my country - Mormon Tabernacle Choir
Washington Post March - Philadelphia Orchestra
Stars & Stripes for ever - Boston "Pops"
Starn-spangled banner - Robert Goulet
Marching along together - Robert Merrill
My country 'tis of thee - Mahalia Jackson.
God Bless America - Kate Smith

Bing, you will observe, is the largest contributor to this essentially American programme.

Goodness knows how you can get it, we're afraid ! Unless you have a US pen-friend.....

The autobiography set of 5 albums made in 1954 is still much in demand despite the fact it has been issued in differing forms since then. And, it continues to turn up. BUT! Consider the following:

> "....whilst in the HMV Shop (Sheffield) I came across A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BING CROSBY. You can imagine my delighted surprise for I have long wanted this set - as, I imagine, do many others. As it was a reasonable £5.99 I snapped it up and hurried home with it. On arrival there I mmediately put it on to play... I got to record two, fine, turned over for side two. I then heard the most horrendous sound I've ever heard - the Sex Pistols or some other outrageous punk outfit. All the way through!
>
> So I took the set back, hoping to exchange it, but unfortunately that was the only copy they had and said they were unlikely to get any more. I was refunded my money but, I was very, very, disappointed."

Now, no less than three members have reported this sort of occurrence; not always side 2 of record 2, but at least one side of the 10 has consisted of modern punk rubbish. How can such a thing happen, you may well ask? We don't know; its a pressing error of monumental proportions.

One of the members retained the set, despite the fault - indeed, I feel I would have, too, preferring nine sides to none! But that is a personal choice. One member wrote to MCA - and as we would confidently predict, received no acknowledgement, leave alone a studied reply.

My inclination in such a circumstance would be to write a strongly-worded letter, bringing into play the Trades Description Act, and sending it by either registered post, or recorded delivery, to MCA. Better still, to Decca who originally issued the set and must, I feel, still have sets in their warehouses.

> I have long felt that Decca/MCA or whoever was holding the rights of issue at the time missed a golden opportunity at the time of Bing's lamented passing. How fitting it would have been to have reissued this fine autobiographical set in a splendid new commemorative package, possibly with additions, complete with some of the massive tributes paid to Bing by the man in the street, fellow artists, prime ministers and Presidents. It would, I am certain, have proved a massive seller, such was the feelings of all at the time. Certainly those of us who have owned it since its first issue would gladly have bought such a memorial presentation. Enterprise, as we well know, is sadly lacking in the management departments of record companies. Even now, it would be not too late.

A further word or two on the album already mentioned may be opportune.

DECCA: (AMERICAN) STARS OF THE THIRTIES. RAL 505
Price £3.99

Many members already have this album; it contains three Bing tracks which are not all that easy to come by and it may, therefore, be of interest to newer members/collectors. These are:

YOUNG & HEALTHY (1933)
SOMEONE STOLE GABRIEL'S HORN (1933)
MOONBURUCK (1933)

Should you require it a good shop could order it for you as its a Decca release. The other artists include Al Jolson, Ruth Etting, Connee Boswell, the Mills Brothers, Marion Davies. Good entertainment.

YOUNG & HEALTHY was banned for a time from broadcasting by the BBC on account of its 'sexist' angles! The lyric that offended was, presumably:

I'm young and healthy,
So let's be bold,
In a year or two or three
Maybe we will be too old!

ACROSS THE PAGE ARE SOME MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS for your interest.

Our film buff, KEITH PARKINSON (address shewn and also on page 3) has accepted the position of UK Representative for the Australian Crosby society. Membership, including four issues of THE CROSBY VOICE, £8 per year. Cheques payable to THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY. A sample issue of THE CROSBY VOICE will be sent on request.

I imagine attendance at the meetings &c. is not compulstory! Of interest, no doubt, to those who want to be associated with all Crosby organisations.

You will note sincere tributes to the 'other Bing Crosby' - the sportsman. That he fished better than he sang is an audacious claim, it might be felt. Interesting, however, that some of Bing's angling equipment is in yet another museum. That Bing was indeed a fine angler was shewn in his being featured in an anglers' film, shot in the Lake District here in the UK - an occasion when so many members had the opportunity of meeting Bing - 1966, if we remember rightly.

Thirdly there is an attempted reproduction of something what was blurred - understandably - in the first place! It was a news item in ITV's Christmas Eve 'Oracle' service. In case you cannot read it (too blurred in some instances): it reads:

"IN CALIFORNIA, a 6FT CHRISTMAS TREE HAS
BEEN PLACED BY THE GRAVE OF 'WHITE CHRISTMAS'
CROONER BING CROSBY".

The photograph was taken on the spur of the moment by the wife of HARRY NOLAN, 7 Saxon Rise, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex TN40 1TF. Anyone with a scrap-book of "Crosby Room" requiring a copy can get one for 50p from Harry.

Join the Victorian
Bing Crosby Society

Movies
Meetings
Cassette library
Social functions
Quarterly Newsletter
Video

U.K. Rep. Keith Parkinson
'Meadowcroft'
Houghtons Lane
St Helens WA10 5LD
Ph: St Helens 22248

Bing's fellow anglers say thanks for the memory

By Conrad Voss Bark

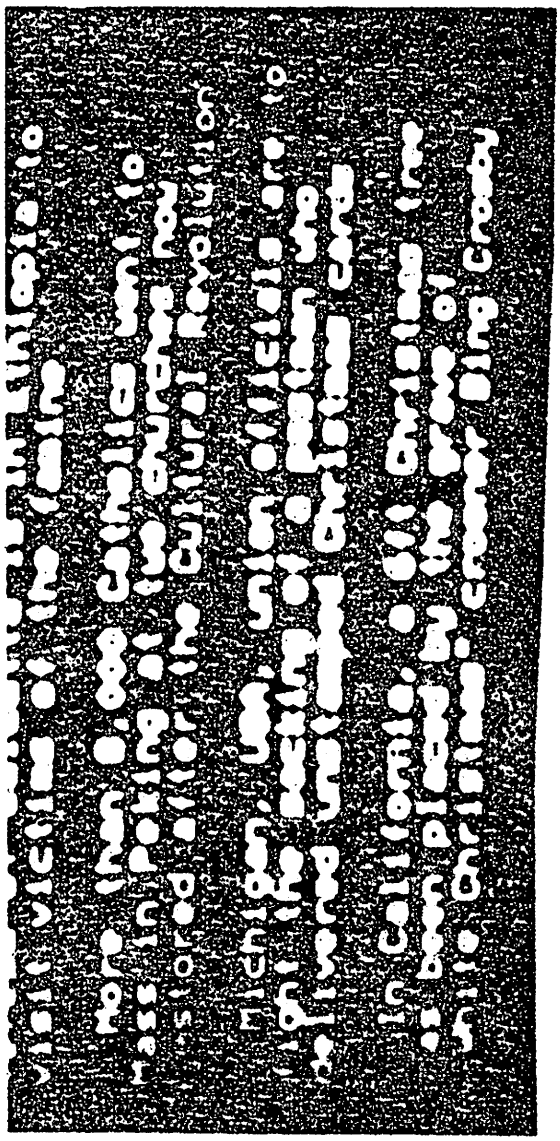
Bing Crosby sang well but he fished better, or so I was once assured. It is not unlikely. Many a man's hobby is of more importance to him than his job. Bing Crosby was a familiar figure on many rivers, especialy in Iceland, almost invariably wearing a trilby hat, smoking a straight-grain briar pipe, and casting a line that went out delicately true and far. The pipe, the hat, and his fishing-tackle are now in a museum in Manchester, Vermont.

They join a collection of more than a thousand fly rods, 400 reels, and heaven knows how many flies that once belonged to Eisenhower, Hoover, Carnegie, Hemingway, and many another famous Americans, now preserved in the newly-created and spacious galleries of the American Museum of Fly Fishing. We have nothing comparable in our country. Our treasures – and we have many – are spread widely in private collections.

In the United States if anyone wants to see the original dressings of the Adams or the Quill Gordons or the rods that were used at the time of Jesse James, they have only to go to Manchester, Vermont, where everything has been brought together under one roof. It is also possible to enjoy putting a fly on the bright and lovely Battenkill river which lies close by.

Many thousands of people go there, to speculate, stand and stare. One of the interesting things to me was the number of American politicians who have been passionate fishermen, among them three, possibly four, Presidents. We have had Prime Ministes who have smoked pipes, played golf and shot grouse, but the only minister of Cabinet rank that I can think of who was a great fly fisherman was Edward Grey, who was Foreign Secretary for about 15 years before and during the First World War.

Whether his colleagues approved or disapproved of Grey's hobby I do not know, but the Prime Minister certainly thought it was a bit odd. Lloyd George is on record as saying: "Grey would have risen to great heights if he hadn't wasted his time fishing."



Nice little anecdote in the autobiography of that legendary film star EDWARD G. ROBINSON, amomg many brilliant roles remembered best possibly for his chilling 'gangster' performances:

> "Leo McCarey noted that two films he had made had not made a 'rouble' in the Soviet Union. The films were GOING MY WAY and BELLS OF ST. MARY'S.
>
> McCarey reasoned that they had been rejected because there was a character in them they didn't like.
>
> 'Bing Crosby?' he was asked.
>
> 'No - God' was his response.

COMMEMORATIVE CROSBY STAMP: It will be recalled that in the Sept. issue of BING last year we reported the initiative of member VIC BYNE (Slough) in regard to a stamp in commemoration of Bing. We now learn that the BC Historical Society also have this in mind; in the February 1985 Newsletter we learn, surprisingly, that Bing will be eligible for such a stamp on Oct 14, 1987, ie 10 years after his death. Further, it seems it takes two more years after approval to get the stamp issued.

One of the BCHS members took a petition in support of the project to the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf tournament this year and got excellent support.

The BCHS is getting members to write in, perhaps with petitions, and say that on getting the approval, they intend to write to other countries, hoping they too will issue a stamp.

Well now - that's excellent. How would we go about it? Who is the stamp-issuing-design authority in Great Britain? If any philatelist has this information we'd be glad to have it and perhaps set the ball rolling.

Although we're well into 1985 I would certainly like to thank all those who sent Christmas greetings (Reg Bristo)...the ideas were infinite and much appreciated. We were especially pleased to receive the greeting of the 45rpm record of WHITE CHRISTMAS/GOD REST YOU MERRY, ENTLEMEN in its Christmas card wrapping. (Studio Cards Ltd., Preston X, Lancs PR1 4AE. The wording inside says this was a special pressing for them - adding to the belief that total sales of WHITE CHRISTMAS will never be accurately known.

A photograph of Bing is included with this issue; mounted on card if necessary, it should prove frameable.

And our word of thanks to all contributors, named or un-named, for letters, cuttings, information &c. To those who say: "I love BING but I'm sorry I never seem to get down to writing..." Not to worry - as long as you go on enjoying the magazine.

Your views always welcome.....

BING LETTERS

MRS. JANET SNOW, 102 Kings Rd., London Colney, Herts:

I would put forward the theory that one LP per day of Bing's (as an absolute minimum) is equal to a 3-hour session with a psychiatrist! When I feel all strung up as anyone with two boys 8 and 10 must feel sometimes - absolute demons tho' lovable - then I shut myself up with a stack of Bing tapes or records and within a short time I feel at peace with the world! In fact, I think he should be prescribed on the National Health!

One thing puzzles me: am I the only person to enjoy both the early recordings and the later ones equally? I can appreciate that his voice was obviously better in the earlier recordings but he did do some really marvellous later ones - the SEASONS LP for instance. I'm thinking of things like AUTUMN IN NEW YORK; really beautiful and difficult, I should think, to sing.

Editor: To the first part - Positively - therapeutic! Now who said that - and when? Second part: 'Lor bless you Janet, of course you not the only one - the true Crosby admirer, while not necessarily thinking every record was a masterpiece, enjoys everything that Bing sang. He had certain attributes (many of them unique) such as timbre, phrasing, interpretation, innovation which never left him - to the extent it was always Bing, good old Bing! I remember getting a letter some time ago which said: 'A thing that baffles me and is never mentioned is: How could Bing sing with such authority, such assurance so that you felt no-one need bother? - and yet at the same time sound modest, almost humble at times, no ego, no bombast, no guv'nor idiocy, no pretentions....' To which I can only say: How indeed? But he did - all of his life.

Trespassing on space further I will confess that most ancients, like yours truly, who clearly remember Bing's first shattering impact do look back on that period with particular affection. It was so exciting.....but the above still applies.

REG BRISTO
7 Greenmeadow Close,
C W M B R A N
GWENT, NP44 4PJ

ERIC JACKSON, 202 Barnsley Rd., Wath-upon-Dearne, Nr. Rotherham:

Just before Christmas I went to see PENNIES FROM HEAVEN shown at our local library - free. Thinking it must be Bing's film I was all set to enjoy it. I was wrong. It was in colour and a sex film. Bing's voice was heard in one number, DID YOU EVER SEE A DREAM WALKING?. The star of the film spoke the words PENNIES FROM HEAVEN on the gallows as he was about to be hanged. End of film. I liked it?

Editor: Well - did you evah? Read it again. I did.

DEREK PARKES, 66 Firs Rd., Winterslow, Salisbury, Wilts:

Its interesting to note that in the 30's and certainly before tape recording, broadcasting artists in the States were allowed to have recordings made of their shows so that they could monitor their performances. The shows were carried by land lines from the broadcasting studios to a nearby recording studio and recorded on 78rpm acetates.

Johnny Mercer was with Benny Goodman in 1939 and he had the shows recorded in this way. His wife, Ginger, has recently released the material, and the first is on the 'Giants of Jazz' label - THE BENNY GOODMAN CARAVANS - Caravans being the name of the radio show. The quality is excellent and I would suggest those interested in Mercer and Goodman should invest - GIANTS OF JAZZ 1030; I think 1033 is the second issue.

THE KMH ACETATES ORIGINATED IN A SIMILAR MANNER.

Editor: An interesting technical point, explaining why so much off-the-air material is now becoming available. But does this explode the theory that KMH was recorded to meet coast-to-coast time variations in the USA?

DICK NETTLETON, 111 Faringdon Rd., Stanford-in-the-Vale,Faringdon, Oxon:

As our information extends about the songs Bing sang, e.g. the turning up of the KMH songs and other radio shows, one turns to thinking about the songs he did not sing. After a lot of thought and pleasant reverie I have come up with the following. Bing produced an LP which he named SONGS I WISH I HAD SUNG. Here's my list of songs I wish he had sung!

Trees	Skye Boat song
In the deep mid-winter.	The Miner's dream of home
Amazing Grace	East of the sun
Sonny Boy	Rose Marie
Smile (by Chaplin)	My song goes round the world.

If anyone has knowledge that Bing did sing any of these I'd be obliged for the information. And other members' selections!

Editor: Another of those harmless speculation games, forsooth! I'd be only too pleased to hear some of the songs he sang on KMH apart from the wealth of them we've already heard. But even with Bing's colossal output on records/radio there are bound to be a lot of good songs that he didn't sing. I've already told you of my liking for ALONE from the Marx Brothers film, A NIGHT AT THE OPERA and which Bing did indeed sing on KMH but no-one seems to have that. What of that beautiful melody SO DEEP IS THE NIGHT (Chopin's TRISTESSE)... You can get a fair idea of how Bing would have sounded on SKYE BOAT SONG - by listening to Mike Holliday in THE BEST OF MICHAEL HOLLIDAY(MFP)

And what a surprise to learn that Bing sang the Lanza epic, BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE on the GEC programme in the early 50's. I'd like to hear that, too.

DON BOSTOCK, 13 Gorse Hill, Virginia Water, Surrey:

Seeing THE MUSIC MAN on TV caused me to wonder if Bing had ever sung (here we go again!) TILL THERE WAS YOU. I can find no reference to to it in JUST FOR THE RECORD.

Editor: Don't really see the connection; Bing was invited to star in this film but declined and Robert Preston took the role. As for the song, Bing certainly didn't commercially record it - but who knows?

NINIAN FAICHNEY, 20 Foundry St., Bainsford, Falkirk:

Coverage of the KMH shows brings back memories of my occasional success in the 1930's in hearing some of them 'live' on short-wave as, I have learned, so many others did. Like you, I am dismayed at the way many words have been corrupted - if that's the description - by people using them to describe something other than their dictionary meaning. Listening to I SURRENDER, DEAR, with the line 'I may act gay, its just a pose, I'm not that way' and other songs which use that charming, innocent, word now, thanks to the corrupters, take on a 'new' meaning. Thank goodness Bing's strict standards made every production free from embarrassment and annoyance through all his years on radio and films. Pirated 'fluffs' were a bit off-colour - but they were never meant to be heard outside of the studio. How different today with the corrupting of words and the double-entendre of pretty well all comedy programmes on TV - with, alas, the audiences lapping it up. I must, at 73, be old-fashioned.

Editor: Old-fashioned perhaps. Decent, definitely, Ninian.

KEN EDGE, 487 Hilton Lane, Worsley, Manchester, M28 5TE:

I am anxious to learn of the title of a song, or songs, Crosby sang on an old film clip which was included in Michael Parkinson's Crosby Christmas show.

Editor: This has me baffled; if anyone can help direct to Ken please.

DENNIS BARKER, Old Railway Inn, Parkend, Lydney, Glos:

Would it be possible to thank all the members who wrote to me after my appeal for pen-friends. The members are not only the best fans, they are truly warm-hearted people.

Editor: Agree - so happy to oblige!

STAN PHILLIPS, 45 Russell Mount, Branksome Wood Rd., Bournemouth:

I was one of the packed audience at the theatre on the end of Bournemouth Pier that joined in the applause for Teddy Johnson and his wonderful tribute to Bing. It was really something. Listening to the radio over Christmas I heard the various 'singers' and their rendition of Christmas songs. I realised this was the best way to appreciate the superb and masterful recordings Bing left us, especially for Christmas. Aren't we lucky?

Editor: Understand Teddy Johnson, who will be at the Rembrandt Hotel on April 27 (see page 5) will be in Bournemouth from May to September!

SOME LETTERS MAY BE ABRIDGED TO COVER ONLY THE MATERIAL CROSBY CONTENT.

Trading POST

Members may advertise free of charge here for all items of Crosbyana - records, tapes, books, pictures &c. There is a nominal £1 charge for non-Crosby items. Keep submissions to a maximum of 6 lines; if lengthy lists are involved, invite a SAE. Entries are printed in good faith but no responsibility is taken for deals; it is up to members to satisfy themselves on that score.

NEIL OGLEY, 20 Wall St., Barnsley, S. Yorks, S70 1NG says he is "desperate" for an album in which Bing sings with Sinatra and Dean Martin, e.g. ROBIN & 7 HOODS, THE SUMMIT, &c. Assistance in obtaining would be greatly appreciated.

MERVYN THOMAS, 52 Gratwicke Rd., Worthing, W. Sussex, BN11 4BH: I missed Alan Dell's broadcast on the Sunday afternoon following Bing's death. Did anyone happen to record it? And if so, can we arrange a copy please?

LES BRICE, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton, Essex CO15 1AT has a copy of the Jolson 10" LP JOLSON MEMORIES LA8512 in good condition. Any reasonable offer accepted.

WANTED: A Bing Crosby BLAZER BADGE, £2.50 offered - BRIAN JONES, 1 Gellihaf Rd., Fleur-de-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1RJ.

JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gdns., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7TJ informs members of the LIMITED EDITION CLUB that record No. JGB 1004 THRO' THE YEARS VOL II is now available. Cost as last time: £5 incl. P & P.

TERRY QUILTY, 1 Foxton Walk, Newall Green, Manchester M23 8YB - Tel. 061 - 436 - 2031 has large collection of Bing LPs and hundreds of nostalgia albums, singers, bands &c. for disposal. Phone or letter.

BILL TOBIN, 198 Claydon, Deacon Way, London SE17 1UG (Phone 01 - 703 - 7233) has a number of Bing LPs for sale. Please send SAE for lists.

ARTHUR BROWN, 50 Birchwood Rd., Tooting, London SW17 9BH (Phone 01-769-6429) is anxious to obtain BING'S HOLLYWOOD 6 (ONLY FOREVER) in good condition.

BILL BUNTINGTON, 266 Westminster Rd., Morecambe, Lancs wants BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN. Must be Ace of Hearts. Will pay cash or trade (plenty of rare albums).

ALAN CHADWICK, 3 Mortimer Close, Hartley Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants, RG27 8EL requires in excellent condition - BING'S HOLLYWOOD No. 11: LE BING: HOLIDAY IN EUROPE (Stereo). Can offer in exchange BING'S HOLLYWOOD No. 2: RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS (Mono): BING SINGS THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS (mono). OR I have a 1½ hr approx video of four rare Bing items, details on request.

Regarding the BRIAN JONES BLAZER BADGE item above, please add: I have 40 Bing LPs for sale - SAE for lists.

For those collectors dedicated to the original 78s, BERT DAY, [illegible] Crescent, Dalbeattie, Scotland DG5 4JY offers I'VE GOT THE GIRL (American issue) to OLD MAN RIVER incl. consequent on the issue of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY albums; more original 78s will become available as the CHRONOLOGICAL series progresses. Ring 0556-611215, or write with SAE with offers please.

KEN MERRY, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, S. Yorks DN4 5JX offers a cassette MOONSTRUCK BING - a collection of 20 MOON songs by Bing. £[illegible]

MRS. E. JACKSON, 14 Peaselands, Desborough, Kettering, Northants, NN14 2JY (see previous issue re. disposal of deceased husband's Bing collection) there are 70 LPs for disposal. SAE for lists and offers to the lady please.

KEN CROSSLAND, 10 Brownes Rd., Bingham, Notts, NG13 8EF offers or trade (preferred). DAYDREAMING (CORAL): JOIN BING & SINGALONG (WARNER W1363) ONLY FOREVER (BING'S HOLLYWOOD 6): BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN (ACE OF HEARTS) SONGS OF A LIFETIME (PHILIPS) BING LIVE AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM (K-TEL) All New, Excellent, or VERY GOOD. Trade wants include BING 1, 4, and 9 - but what else have you?

The elusive SPOKANES of KMH material Vols 1, 2 and 3 (SPOKANES 24,25 and 26) plus SHH! ITS BING; RENEE CHESTER has ten sets of these just delivered from US - price is £8.00 per album; cheques okay. We are now suffering alas from the effects of the dollar/£ exchange unprecedented levels. Also on the video scene, HERE COMES THE GROOM, RIDING HIGH, SAY ONE FOR ME, JUST FOR YOU, and 1936 ANYTHING GOES have been added to those already available: 48 Milton Rd., Hanwell, London,W7 1LE or phone 01 - 567 - 5560

THE VIDEO mentioned in the previous issue, page 39, remains available and has been well received. John Marshall tells us it has been amended and improved: cost is £15 - address as on page 6 this issue.

BING - A VOICE FOR ALL SEASONS by our Canadisn member, SHELDON O'CONNELL remains available from KERRYMAN PUBLICATIONS, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland at £10, post paid. An excellent book on Bing, very well illustrated.

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD is the slim, hardback, volume which lists all Bing's recordings from the first to the last in chronological and alphabetical order. No one should be without this excellent reference book, so useful too for hours of browsing. £3.50 post paid from JOHN JOYCE (BOOKBINDERS) Saltmeadows Rd., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear - new members will be particularly interested in this. For overseas members different rates (as with all publications) necessarily apply on account of high postal charges, e.g. European £4.00; US/Canadian £4.00 surface mail, £6.00 airmail. All remittances in sterling please to JOHN JOYCE, ICC A/C.

THE ALTERNATE BING CROSBY by Colin Pugh - an analysis of alternate 'takes' of Bing's recordings £2.50 post paid from the Editor. £3.00 European, six dollars US/Canadian.

In the item of the previous issue page 46 re. huge auction by BRUCE D. DAVIDSON, PO BOX 50440, Nashville, Tennessee, 37205, USA. the cost of lists to US members was inadvertently given as 10 dollars. It is in fact ONE DOLLAR!

RICHARD PEARSON, PO Box 1481, Arlington, VA 22210 USA again asks if anyone has photographs taken at Leeds last Sept. available?

ICC car-stickers, blue/gold, 3" dia. available from BARRY THECKSTON, 13 Cunliffe Aven., Ramsbottom, Lancs, BLO 9PY 60p each, or two for £1 note!

PLEASE NOTE: Name at bottom previous page is HUNTINGTON, not as shewn.

disc CROSBY

The celebrated Welsh actor ANTHONY HOPKINS turned up as the guest on Roy Plomley's marathon-running DESERT ISLAND DISCS recently. Turned out he was a very keen Crosby fan - and 'id his father had been one, too.

He chose WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT 1931 version which would seem to confirm his keenness.

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Mr. Hopkins also said he admired Bing as an artist and particularly his personality. He related that he had seen Bing appear in America and thought at last his opportunity to meet him had come; but, he said, Bing was then with the family and he felt he couldn't approach him. Pity.

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Comment in the Christmas issue of BING concerning Brunswick 01874 puzzled some readers. The reason is that two different couplings were used for this number, e.g. TWO CIGARETTES IN THE DARK and SHADOW WALTZ, plus the former with SHADOW WALTZ. Obviously an error and it follows that either or both issues are exceedingly rare. Come to that, however, any records of that long-ago era are now rare in their original form. And these titles haven't come in for much micro-groove reissue either.

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This mixed coupling, for want of a better phrase, was not unique for it occurred in a few other cases early on - 02534 for example was REMEMBER ME/THERE'S A GOLDMINE IN THE SKY or REMEMBER ME with AT YOUR COMMAND. Moreover some records were issued of a Bing track on one side and another artist on thereverse. Such things are of absorbing interest to the discographers. They know all about such things - but for newer members, they may like to know that the numbers shewn on labels are the catalogue numbers, while the matrix no. (also of great importance to the aforementioned researchers) is engraved, or scratched, actually on the smooth portion of the shellac record. A precautionary glance at a 78 shows that the matrix no. is also on the label, above the issue (cat.) no.

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A letter from Vince Waring (Wigan) says: One of the big mysteries of Christmas for me is why Warner Bros. have never reissued the LP I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS - for me one of the best-

-ever Christmas LPS. Or has it been issued - reissued - and I have missed it?

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No, it has never been reissued - as an LP that is, though it has (or tracks from it) have appeared, notably, on a bonus record with a READERS DIGEST collection. Indeed, the whole of the LP was on this album. But thereby develops a mystery.

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As Vince says, I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS was indubitably a Warner Bros. issue, WM8136. Yet when the album appeared as a bonus record, the sleeve said "Recordings by Courtesy of Capitol Records Inc., and manufactured by RCA Records, New York!" Obviously Warner disposed of their rights - to Capitol which, in this country, is an EMI label. With us, so far? We've remarked before on the mad, mad, set up pertaining to the record industry but this takes a bit of understanding.

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If, as indeed seems obvious, Capitol own the rights, why haven't THEY been alive to the potential of reissuing the album? The perennial issue (and success) of the WHITE CHRISTMAS album indicates a continuing demand for Bing's Christmas records. Mind, I wouldn't go quite as far as Vince in saying it is the "best-ever" but it is, nevertheless, a fine album. Tracks like O HOLY NIGHT, WINTER WONDERLAND, THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY, THE LITTLEST ANGEL ensure that. Amazing to reflect that I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS first came out 23 years ago in 1962.

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It was with considerable surprise, if not shock, that we realised it is now eleven years since the ICC produced a comprehensive listing of all Crosby 78rpm records. Although it might be thought that with the LP so predominant interest in these records (78s) had withered away, we beg to wonder. Mail indicates continuing interest in Bing's records as they were issued originally.

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In a revised listing we have in the files you may like to know that the total number of such issues is 602, that is, 3 more than shewn in our 1974 publication. The question now is: should we go ahead with a revised listing? It means a lot of detailed work but if the demand is there, we will gladly undertake publication of the revised listing as a separate publication. It should be remembered that Crosby 78s were issued not only by Brunswick (tho' of course that was the principal label) but by many others, e.g. Columbia, Ariel, Philips, HMV and so on.

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The listing would run to about 15 close-printed pages showing catalogue nos. and, of course, titles of each side. The cost, as with all our publications, would be restricted to little more than actual cost of materials. It would not, therefore, be expensive. Perhaps members would let us know in the next few weeks - perhaps when renewing subscriptions, or by dropping a line. We could then assess the desirability of going ahead.

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The reason we have got onto this subject of a 78 listing was as a result of FRANK WILGAUS in Cleethorpes telling us he was close to completing his listing of 78rpm records that have NOT been issued on micro-groove (LP). Frank has the problem that faces all researchers and discographers these days, and that is the proliferation of independent (sometimes 'pirate') albums. In other words, do they constitute a "commercial issue"?

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Up until recent years we looked to Decca, MCA, MCA/EMI for the reissue of Bing records on LP, or in collections of LPs. And these, of course, constituted pukka commercial issues. But do the 'independent' issues referred to - welcome as they are - come into the same category? Its a good question, especially as such issues are not, alas, normally available to a lot of members, and collectors. True, most of the independents such as Spokane, Totem and Broadway have concentrated on radio material but Sunbeams 'Distinctly Bing', Living Era, Pelican, Historia, Joker among others have issued authentic Crosby 78s, altogether apart from the many 'private - limited edition' LPs which also used 78s.

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Again, Biograph issued the full Mack Sennett songs and though they never were commercial recordings in the gramophone sense, does this make them 'commercial' issues? You see, therefore, the dilemmas and problems facing discographers nowadays!

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The following notice has been received from America via the BCHS:

RADIO HERITAGE PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS
"THE CROSBY YEARS"

Thirteen hour-long broadcasts, produced by John Salisbury, as heard on Oregon Public Radio October 3 to December 26, 1982 - Plus: a full hour bonus production containing Crosby items for a brace of new radio programs now in preparation.

The programs are on 7 120-minute audio cassettes only, each containing 2 hours of programming. Entire set of 7 must be ordered - no individual hours. Available mid-March, 1985. Domestic price: 13 shows at 12.50 dollars each plus free bonus show. Total: 162.50 dollars including First Class postage and handling. Overseas air mail: 165.00 dollars. Make checks (cheques) or money orders payable to RADIO HERITAGE PRODUCTIONS, 517 S.W. 4th Ave., Portland, Oregon, 97204, USA.

Printed as received; we have just two comments -

JOHN SALISBURY is a very considerable Crosby man and his programmes earned much approbation.

Secondly, with the pound/dollar almost at parity - one for one that is - you can work out the cost very easily indeed !

IT IS FAIR TO PLACE ON RECORD THAT LETTERS UNIVERSALLY HAILED JOHN MARSHALL'S INSPIRATION OF PUTTING IN SUCH A TASTEFUL AND TELLING MEMORIAL TO BING NOTICE IN THE AMERICAN SHOW-BUSINESS PAPER, "VARIETY".

We also had a lot of mail, as indicated elsewhere, on Barry Norman's TV programme featuring Bing in THE HOLLYWOOD GREATS. To have picked a selection would have been difficult; to use them all would have filled this issue of BING! All writers are thanked.

SONG TITLES ARE NOT COPYRIGHT - the songs are, of course, but not the titles. Bing sang some songs which had the same title, e.g. WOULD YOU, I LOVE YOU, I NEVER KNEW - two of each. He also sang ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT and it had nothing to do with Wales! So we commented on the fact that Bing had sung a song called LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY - in 1936 for it was clear this was not the same song he sang in 1944 with such success. We were not inundated with information on this one! But, we did get the answer - in two parts. One from this side of the Atlantic and one from America! STAN WOOTTON, 60 The Bridle, Glen Parva, Leicester enlivened a drab morning for us with this:

I can't help with the 1936 LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY but can advise that the 1944 one was featured in the film COVER GIRL starring Rita Hayworth and, I believe, Gene Kelly. The film wasn't up to much but this particular song was indeed one of the good things that came from it. Bing's recording of it was terrific and remains one of my favourites. I recall when I first had a go at it (strictly bathroom baritone) how easy the notes seemed to flow more or less at the same easy level - until the last couple of lines 'Just one look and then I knew, etc.' and nearly strangled myself getting there. Bing had that natural talent of just flowing straight into it and made it seem so easy.

In fact, thinking back about this and all those years ago I think would still rather listen to Bing singing the song than look at Rita Hayworth as she was then - and I assure you there's nothing wrong with my hormones - either then or now!

Cor! And that's all we can say - thinking of Rita Hayworth.... but from America, (California) our good friend Bernard Denham enlightened us on the 1936 LONG AGO & FAR AWAY.

The earlier version was written by none other than that celebrated Crosby songwriter, Leo Robin! What a strange twist that he wrote LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY for a film (non-Bing) entitled THREE CHEERS FOR LOVE in 1936 which Bing sang only on KMH. While he made the same-title song a tremendous hit eight years later.

You will easily recall that Leo Robin, with various composers but chiefly Robin Rainger, wrote a whole string of great songs. And for Bing he provided PLEASE, ONE HOUR WITH YOU, LOVE IN BLOOM, LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, I CAN'T ESCAPE FROM YOU, JUNE IN JANUARY, WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE, BLUE HAWAII, YOU'RE A SWEET LITTLE HEADACHE, and others.

Robin Rainger, you may not know (he wrote the melodies, Robin the words) died in a plane crash in October, 1942 Robin collaborated with others after this tragedy.

LAZY MR C

he last two pages of this issue consist of more details of GEC radio programmes and, in fact, they complete the full list of such shows, ending in 1954. It was quite a year, too. We were well into the television age and radio was taking a back seat. Bing never quite left radio, however, but had his sights on TV - as he was bound to do.

1954 might well be taken as the middle of Bing's marathon and illustrious career. The halcyon, pioneering, consolidating 'Thirties were well behind as were the part-Wartime 40's making yet another enduring decade for Bing Crosby. And could anyone be thinking in the 50's that after a quarter of a century Bing might, just might, be considering retirement - retiring to the sports he loved? Well, 1954 might be taken as a yardstick for the 'casual', 'lazy' Mr. C.

Completing the GEC appears to have been a minor item in his 1954 schedule. In that year he completed and published his half-way autobiography, CALL ME LUCKY, tho' neither he nor us knew then it was merely half-way.

In that same year he recorded the 5-album musical autobiography record set under the prompting and prodding of Buddy Cole.

With Buddy Cole he also recorded - almost informally - a couple of hundred songs for future use in radio programmes 'as required', some of which 20-odd years later received the Pete Moore/Ken Barnes treatment.

Perhaps for a change, he was in the Decca studios throughout the year recording around 30 titles! Is anyone keeping tally?

To augment this schedule, he actually made two highly successful films, e.g. WHITE CHRISTMAS and THE COUNTRY GIRL!

It might be fairly claimed that so far in 1954 Bing had accomplished more than many artists achieve in a full career.

One guesses, too, that he hosted his annual Pro-Am Golf Tournament, as well as indulging in his individual recreation games.

A little research would, no doubt, reveal that Bing also made some TV appearances.

In 1954 Bing reached 51 years of age; Dixie had been deceased for two years. If it is said that Bing threw himself into work to combat the loss and the loneliness, well possibly, but would anyone doubt that he would have carried out this incredible schedule anyway?

Its not unusual to read that a modern artist, or pop-group, takes six months to make an album, just to get things in perspective. No wonder Bing felt the need to tape some of his shows ! But tape or not, they still had to be performed.

So, Bing's statement that he was 'lazy' has about as much validity as another famous quotation of his: "I've stretched a talent so thin its almost transparent for an improbable number of years."

Certainly it helps if one likes one's work, and Bing also says he did what he wanted to do and got paid for it.

But, look at that schedule again! Lazy? I think not.